A 1134. k. 37.

A BRIDLE FOR THE TONGUE:

OR, SOME *Practical Diſcourſes*

Under theſe following HEADS, *viz.*

Of Prophane, *or* Atheiſtical Diſcourſe.
Of Blaſphemy.
Of Raſh *and* Vain Swearing.
Of Falſe-accuſing, *or* bearing Falſe-witneſs.
Of Calumny, *or* Slander.
Of Detraction, *or* Backbiting, *and of* Tale-bearing, *and* Reproof.
Of Cenſoriouſneſs, *or* Raſh Judging.
Of Scoffing, Deriſion, *or* Mocking.
Of Contumely, *or* Reproach.
Of Imprecation, *or* Curſing.
Of Brawling, Quarrelling, *or* Wrangling.
Of Diſſimulation, *or* Deceit.
Of Flattery.
Of Lying, Equivocation, Promiſe-breaking, *and* Diſcovering Secrets.
Of Talkativeneſs, Garrulity, *or* Vain Babbling.
Of Oſtentation, *or* Boaſting.
Of Querulouſneſs, *or* Murmuring.
Of Fooliſh Jeſting.
Of Obſcene, *and* Immodeſt Talk.

By HENRY HOOTON, *M. A.*

Virtutem primam eſſe puta compeſcere Linguam.
Sermo datur cunctis, animi ſapientia paucis. Cato.

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BRITISH
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SEP

TO THE READER.

THESE *Plain* DISCOURSES *which were lately delivered to a Country Auditory from the Pulpit, are now preſented to every Candid* Reader *from the Preſs: The intolerable Sway and Dominion that too many of the Vices here condemned, had obtained in the Place where theſe* SERMONS *were preached, was the main Motive of Compoſing them; and becauſe, as deſperate and dangerous Wounds are not expected to be healed by one Dreſſing, ſo ſuch Enormities cannot be ſuppoſed to be rectified by Hearing them once found fault with, (the Reiteration of which, nevertheleſs, in the ſame way, would not be allow'd of:) I therefore thought it might not be amiſs to reduce the ſame into a little* Enchiridion, *and recommend it in this manner, That ſo it might be always ready by thoſe, who ſtand in need of ſuch Admonitions to work upon them, as it ſhall pleaſe* GOD *to give Opportunity: And to this I was the more induced, becauſe others have been apt to think the ſame might not be altogether Unſerviceable elſewhere; as well as among thoſe, for whom they are chiefly deſigned.*

I know very well, That as it is a moſt thankleſs and diſtaſtful Office to tell Perſons of their Faults, ſo likewiſe that ſome of theſe Subjects *have been already handled in a moſt excellent manner by a very able Pen: But upon my Recommending the ſame, as I found thoſe incomparable* DISCOURSES *in very few Hands, ſo alſo, that they were above the reach of ſuch vulgar Capacities as theſe are chiefly deſigned for: And to that End, I have endeavoured to remove another Objection, Perſons that underſtand not the Worth of thoſe Writings are wont to make, by proving all along, from ſeveral Places of Scripture, whatſoever I aſſert: And indeed, ſuch*

To the READER.

Subjects *are ſo neceſſary to be attended to by all, that they can never be too much inculcated, tho' the Method be never ſo different. Neither can it be ſuppoſed, but that on treating on ſo many common Topicks, ſome few Hints from others may be met with, (as they took ſome from thoſe that wrote before 'em:) but to prevent the Cenſure of too curious* Criticks, *I freely acknowledge that, when Opportunity ſerved, I ſometimes choſe to deliver my Thoughts in others Expreſſions, rather than my own, from harbouring too good a Conceit of which I am abundantly checkt by the Senſe of my own Inſufficiency; and whatſoever Sentence ſome may paſs upon theſe few Sheets, or whatſoever Exceptions others may make againſt them, I ſhall ſtill ſatisfie my ſelf with the Teſtimony of* GOD, *and my Conſcience, as to the Sincerity and Honeſty of my Intention and Deſign, in expoſing the ſame to Publick View.*

I am very ſenſible indeed, That this little Treatiſe *is far from being free from all Defects; and then as to the Faults of the Preſs (occaſioned by my great Diſtance from the ſame) they muſt be expected to be many and groſs, which I the more earneſtly deſire the* Reader *to pardon, becauſe I hope thereby ſome of my own may paſs without diſtinction. In ſhort, theſe* DISCOURSES, *ſuch as they are, (leaving the Succeſs to Divine Providence, with my hearty and ſerious Prayers, that they may ſomething tend to the Publick Good) I here commend to the* Reader, *(to whom both the uſefulneſs of the Matter, and the ſmallneſs of the Bulk, will, I hope, render it Acceptable) deſiring, That if he reap any Benefit thereby, GOD alone may have the Praiſe and Glory, (to whom alone it is due) and that in his Prayers to Him, he will vouchſafe to remember,*

His hearty Well-wiſher,

HEN. HOOTON.

Piddletown,
near *Dorcheſter,*
May, 1. 1708.

A Bridle for the Tongue.

JAMES i. 26.

If any Man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this Man's Religion is vain.

INTRODUCTION.

I. MOST are of Opinion, That the Author of this Epiſtle, was not the Son of *Zebedee*, and Brother of *John*, *Matt.* x. 2. (who was ſlain not long after our Saviour's Aſcenſion, *Acts* xii. 2. before this Diſperſion of the Jewiſh Chriſtians was ſo conſiderable as it was at the Writing of this Epiſtle) but *James* the Son of *Alpheus*, *Mat.* x. 3. and Brother of St. *Jude*, called *James the Leſs*, *Mark* xv. 40. (becauſe perhaps he was leſs in Stature, or of leſs Note, or Younger than the Son of *Zebedee*) and the Brother of our Lord, *Gal.* i. 19. (*i. e.* his Kinſman, or Couſin-German, which is ordinarily expreſs'd by Brother in the Sacred Dialect) commended for a principal Pillar in the Church of God, *Gal.* ii. 9. who abiding at *Jeruſalem*, (where he was Biſhop) after that moſt of the Apoſtles were departed from thence, as having a more ſpecial Care and Charge of his own Nation, the Jewiſh People, wrote this Epiſtle in general to ſuch of them, as were diſperſed into ſeveral Countries and Provinces abroad, and not to any particular Church of one Denomination, as St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles were directed.

II. In the Firſt Chapter of this Epiſtle, he perſwades them to Patience, Reſignation, a prudent Carriage or Demeanour under the Croſs, and both a hearing and doing the Word, and Will of God: In the Second he exhorts them to ſhew the Soundneſs of their Profeſſion, and Sincerity of their Faith, by an exemplary Courſe, and continuance in the Practice of all Chriſtian Duties, particularly to be loving and merciful to all without reſpect of Perſons: In the Third he diſſwades from raſh and cenſorious Taxings of others, and ſhews that true Wiſdom conſiſts not in Strife and Envying, but in being of a mild and peaceable Temper: In the next Chapter he condemns Covetouſneſs and Pride, and exhorts, that being ever mindful of the Uncertainty of this Life we ſhould commit our ſelves, and all our Affairs, to God's Providence; and in the laſt place, he recommends Patience under Afflictions, and a brotherly care of the ſpiritual Welfare of one another, wherewith he cloſeth this Epiſtle.

III. But in nothing doth he ſeem more Earneſt, than in his Exhortation to a due Government of the Tongue, about which almoſt the whole Third Chapter is took up; where he ſays, *ver.* 2. *&c. If any Man offend not in word, the ſame is a perfect Man*, a ſincere Chriſtian indeed, and endued with much Wiſdom and Diſcretion, and able alſo to Bridle the whole Body, or all the other Parts and Members thereof, which are much eaſier to be governed than the Tongue. And as in managing of Horſes (whoſe Mouths, as the Pſalmiſt obſerves, *muſt be held in with bit, and bridle, leſt they fall upon us, Pſal.* xxxii. 9.) when we have put Bits into their Mouths, we are thereby enabled to make them obey us, and turn about their whole Bodies as we pleaſe; as alſo the Ships on the Sea, thoſe floating Caſtles, and vaſt unweildy Veſſels, which the Winds and Waves do often carry ſo violently before them, yet the skilful Pilot, by means of the Helm or Stern, a ſmall part, and of an inconſiderable bigneſs (in reſpect of the whole Ship) is able to rule and turn it as he pleaſes: So the Tongue, though a little Member, and one of the ſmalleſt Parts of Man's Body,

yet

yet boasteth great things, keeps a great stir, and does a great deal of mischief, as a little Fire will set a whole House or Town in a flame. Neither indeed can the Tongue be more fitly likened to any thing, than to Fire; for though it be but one, and that a very small, Member of the Body, yet so it may be used as to set a Family, a Town, a Church, a Kingdom, a whole World on Fire with Strife, Contention, and all manner of Wickedness, setting all in a Combustion or Flame, being it self set at work by the Devil, and kindled by that Fire that comes from Hell: For so saith the Apostle, *Jam.* iii. 6. *The Tongue is a Fire, a world* [multitude or mighty deal] *of iniquity amongst our Members, defiling the whole Body* [with Swearing, Lying, Slandering, &c.] *and setting on fire the course* [or whole frame] *of nature, and it is set on fire of hell*, i. e. the Devil.

IV. Moreover, as he adds, *v.* 7, 8. *Every kind of Beasts, and of Birds, and of Sepents, and Things in the Sea is tamed, and hath been tamed of Mankind: But the Tongue no Man can tame, it is an unruly Evil, full of deadly poyson*; i. e. Daily Experience shews, how by the power and skill of Man, the Violence and Poyson of all other Creatures may be restrained and repressed, and they may be disarm'd of their Weapons and Means of hurting mortally; but 'tis harder to subdue the Tongue than any of these, it being in such as have sharpened their Tongues like Serpents, and have Adder's Poyson under their Lips, an irremediable Cause of many Evils, sticking, wounding, and killing like the most venomous Beast, so that no Antidote can be sufficient against it.

V. Which if so, it can never be unseasonable to endeavour to prevent such a world of Mischief, and promote such a due Government of this unruly Member, as the Apostle recommends, especially if we consider, that without our following his Advice in this Particular, it will be in vain to do so in any other: For so run the Words of St. *James*, *If any Man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this mans Religion is vain*; i.e. If any one flatters himself with a vain Conceit and Perswasion that he is truly

Religious, and makes a ſhew of ſerving and worſhipping God as he ought, ſuch a Perſon puts a Cheat upon himſelf, if he fooliſhly thinks his Religion will ever ſtand him in any ſtead; it being as vain as his Hopes, (notwithſtanding all his Hypocriſie and Boaſting) as long as he gives his Tongue the reins to affront his Maker, or rail riotouſly on his fellow Chriſtians, and doth not bridle and curb that petulant and invenom'd Member: A Metaphor taken from unruly Horſes, which muſt be bridled and curb'd, that they may be the better govern'd. Thus Holy *David* ſays, *Pſal.* xxxix. 1. *He would take heed to his ways, that he did not ſin with his tongue: He would keep his mouth with a bridle, while the wicked was before him*; he knew how unruly an Evil the Tongue is, and therefore ought to be confined, and chain'd down, like ſome fierce and ungovernable Beaſt, and therefore he was reſolved to ſet a ſtrict Watch on the door of his Lips, and refrain his Mouth from any Expreſſions that might offend either God or Man. Which puts me in mind of what ſeveral have related concerning a Primitive Chriſtian, (whom ſome call *Pambus*, and others *Bembo*) how that coming to a Friend to teach him a Pſalm, he began with what I juſt now mentioned; but upon his hearing the very firſt Words, *I ſaid I will take heed to my ways*, &c. he ſtopt him, Telling him this was enough for him, if he could learn it as he ought: And being, after ſome Months, found fault with for not coming again, he replied, He had not yet learnt his firſt Leſſon; yea, after almoſt Twenty Years, he profeſt, That in all that time he had ſcarce learnt to fulfill that one Line.

VI. But this muſt not diſcourage us from endeavouring after what was recommended to him: And that we may not be ſlothful and negligent in a Matter of ſo great Concern, is the Deſign of the enſuing Meditations: For this Work, though it be difficult, yet is abſolutely neceſſary, ſince *in the power of the tongue are both life and death, Prov.* xviii. 21. So that the thing to be diſcourſed on, is a prudent and uſeful governing and managing our Words and Speeches with the utmoſt Vigilance and Caution; a Vertue, and piece of Wiſdom, ſo often recommended

commended by *Solomon* throughout his whole Book of *Proverbs*, and by the inſpired Pen-Men elſewhere, as, *Prov.* iv. 24. *Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverſe lips put far from thee*; and, *Prov.* x. 18, 19, 20, 31. *He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a ſlander, is a fool: In the multitude of words there wanteth not Sin, but he that refraineth his lips, is wiſe, the tongue of the juſt is as choice ſilver; and his mouth bringeth forth wiſdom, but the froward tongue ſhall be cut out:* and again, *Prov.* xii. 13, 14, 18. *The wicked is ſnared by the tranſgreſſion of his lips: but a man ſhall be ſatisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth; and the tongue of the wiſe is health. He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life, but he that openeth wide his lips ſhall have deſtruction, Prov.* xiii. 3. So likewiſe doth the Pſalmiſt exhort us to keep our *tongues from evil, and our lips from ſpeaking guile, Pſalm* xxxiv. 13. and St. *Paul, to let our Speech be always with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt*; i. e. Prudence and Diſcretion.

VII. For what *Plato* ſaid of great Wits, That they be either great Evils, or great Bleſſings to a Commonwealth, may be likewiſe ſaid of the Tongue, that doubtful Engine of good and evil; producing excellent Benefits, or grievous Miſchiefs, according as it is managed; whence, as *Æſop* gave a true Account of this Member, when he ſaid, It was the beſt, and the worſt; ſo *Anacharſis* being demanded, What in Man is both good and bad? anſwered, The Tongue: And it is reported of *Pittacus*, (*a*) one of the wiſe Men of *Greece*, That *Amaſis*, King of *Egypt*, ſending unto him a Beaſt for Sacrifice, deſired him to ſend him back that part which was the beſt, and that which was the worſt; ſuppoſing he would have ſent back Two diſtinct parts; but he cutting out the Tongue, ſent him only that, intimating, That nothing was better than that, when rightly uſed, nor worſe than it, when not ſo. For, as *Democritus* was wont to term Speech, The Image or Reſemblance of a Man's Life; ſo our Saviour tells us, *Luke* vi. 45. *A good man out of the good treaſure of his heart, bringeth*

(*a*) *Eraſm. de Lingua.* p. 3. *Baſil.* 1525.

forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treaſure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth ſpeaketh.

VIII. Since then, nothing is worſe than an ill Tongue, that *world of iniquity, that unruly evil, full of deadly poyſon, defiling the whole body, and ſetting on fire the courſe of nature, being ſet on fire of hell, Jam.* iii. 6. 8. (for as *Solomon* affirms, *Prov.* xvi. 27. *An ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is as a burning fire:*) ſo on the other hand, ſince *a wholeſome tongue is a tree of Life, Prov.* xv. 4. And as *Heſiod* ſays, *The beſt Treaſure a Man hath:* 'Tis ſtrange Perſons ſhould take leſs care of their Tongues, than of any thing elſe. Our Saviour hath told us, *Mat.* xii. 37. *That by our words we ſhall be juſtified, and by our words we ſhall be condemned*; and therefore it muſt needs be acknowledged a great Vertue to bridle and govern the Tongue aright; which ſince 'tis of ſo valuable and ſlippery a Nature, and though Speech be given to almoſt all, yet very few are ſo wiſe as to uſe it as they ought: I ſhall therefore endeavour to recommend ſuch a conſtant Reſtraint, and careful Guidance of the Tongue, as may prevent its tranſgreſſing thoſe Rules which divine Law, true Prudence, or right Reaſon hath preſcribed, and hinder it from thwarting thoſe natural Ends, and proper Uſes for which it was framed, and to which it was fitted; ſuch as are chiefly promoting God's Glory, our Neighbour's Good, and our own true Wellfare: Whence, therefore, we ſhall reduce the Offences of Speech, (though many and various in kind) to ſuch as are,

Firſt, More directly committed againſt God, and confront Religion or Piety.

Second, Such as are againſt our Neighbour, and violate Truth, Juſtice, Charity or Peace; or,

Third, Such as are againſt our ſelves, infringing, and violating Sobriety, Prudence, Decency, Modeſty, or Diſcretion.

PART

PART I. SECT. I.

Of Prophane, or Atheiſtical Diſcourſe.

I. AS to the firſt of theſe, 'tis certain one of the great Uſes of Speech was to glorify God, to magnify his Goodneſs, and praiſe his Holy Name; *Offering the Sacrifice of Praiſe to God continually, that is, the Fruit of our Lips giving Thanks to his Name,* Heb. xiii. 15. *The Lord,* ſays the wiſe Man, *hath given me a Tongue for my Reward, and I will praiſe him therewith,* Eccleſ. xi. 22. *And, O Lord,* ſaith *David, open thou my Lips, and my Mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy Praiſe,* Pſal. li. 15. As Speech is the Gift of God (*Ex.* iv. 11. *Prov.* xvi. 1.) wherein Man excelleth all other Creatures, ſo was it given us to this End, *That we might glorifie him:* Neither are the honourable Titles of his Glorious Majeſty to be taken in our Mouths, unleſs upon juſt and weighty Occaſions: Hence 'tis the Royal Pſalmiſt doth ſo often term his Tongue his Glory, and the beſt Member that he had, *Pſal.* xvi. 9. xxx. 12. lvii. 8. cviii. 1. and accordingly he made this, which was the beſt uſe of it, *I will praiſe thee with the Pſaltery, even thy Truth, O my God; unto thee will I ſing with the Harp, O thou holy One of* Iſrael! *My Lips,* ſaith he, *ſhall greatly rejoice, when I ſing unto thee; and my Tongue alſo ſhall talk of thy Righteouſneſs all the Day long,* Pſal. lxxi. 22, 23, 24.

II. Hence, becauſe the Glory of God is the principal End of our Creation, the firſt Petition in the Lord's Prayer, runs thus: *Hallowed,* or *ſanctifyed be thy Name,* where by Name, is meant God himſelf, or God in his Eſſence, Attributes, and all Things that have peculiar relation to him; and is the ſame, as if you ſhould ſay, O God, who by reaſon of thy ſupereminent Perfection, and divine Attributes, art worthy to be had in the higheſt Veneration, and praiſed by all the Works of thy Hand, let thy ſacred Name be treated by us, and all Mankind at all times, and in every Place with that Re-

verence and religious Reſpect, that becomes ſo great a Majeſty; and be ſanctified, and adored, honoured, and glorified both in publick and private, in our Hearts, Tongues and Actions, or in Thought, Word and Deed for evermore. Which certainly condemns the profane, and atheiſtical Diſcourſe of thoſe deſperate Bravado's, who allow neither a God, nor Heaven, nor Hell; but ſtrive all they can to unmake him, that made them; by levelling all their Talk againſt the very Being of God, and ſhooting out their Arrows, even bitter Words directly againſt Heaven. This bold ſort of Rebellion, which ſtrikes not only at God's Authority, or Attributes, but himſelf; before any ſhould venture upon, methinks they ſhould firſt be ſure there is no God; which if there be, it cannot be ſuppoſed, he ſhould permit thoſe, as thus provoke, and defie him, to go unpuniſhed.

III. It was good Advice which was given the Athenians, That they ſhould be ſure King *Philip* was dead, before they expreſſed their Joy for his Deceaſe, leſt perhaps they might find him alive to revenge that haſty Triumph; and then, when once ſuch profane Wretches have ſufficient Demonſtration to juſtifie their Audaciouſneſs, they may the better lay claim to this Liberty, and ſay, *Their Lips are their own, who is Lord over 'em, and that with their Tongues they will prevail.* But they muſt firſt eraſe that natural and indelible Signature of God, which humane Souls in their firſt Origin are ſuppoſed to be ſtampt with; they muſt be well aſſured, that all that is delivered in the Word of God, or confirmed by the common Conſent of all Nations, is nothing but meer Dream, and Impoſture, and that there is no ſuperior Being, that did either create at firſt, or doth ſtill preſerve us; but that Men and Women ſprung up at firſt, like Muſhrooms, out of the Mud and Slime of the Earth; and are kept moving a while here by ſome kind of Mechaniſm, or Clock-work, which finally ceaſes, and periſheth by Death. But much more fooliſh and daring is it to diſpute, (as one of that Atheiſtical Gang is ſaid to have done) "That he was ſure there "was no God, becauſe, ſaid he, if there was one, he "would

" would have ſtruck him to Hell with Thunder, and " Lightning' that had ſo reviled, and blaſphemed him: But this is daily anſwered in thoſe Words of the Apoſtle, *Acts* xvii. 31. *That God hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that Man, whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given Aſſurance unto all Men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead:* Neither certainly ought the Goodneſs, and Forbearance, and Long-ſuffering of God (which are ſome of his divine Attributes, and eſſential Perfections) to be abuſed, and perverted into Arguments againſt his Being.

SECT. II.

Of Blaſphemy.

I. BLaſphemy, or ſpeaking any evil Thing of God, making War with Heaven it ſelf, and flying as it were in the Face of the Almighty; or ſcoffing at Religion, and ſpeaking reproachfully of God's Ordinances, is another Offence of the like Nature: St. *Paul* exhorts the *Coloſſians*, Chap. iii. v. 8. *to put off Blaſphemy out of their Mouths:* Which Caution is always very ſeaſonable, becauſe not only the ſame Apoſtle hath foretold, *That in the laſt Days Blaſphemies ſhall ariſe in the World*, 2 Tim. iii. 2. But we find indeed there have been all along too many ſuch execrable Perſons in it. How long ago is it ſince *Pharaoh*, chiding with *Moſes*, and *Aaron* ſaid, *Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey his Voice, to let* Iſrael *go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let* Iſrael *go*, Exod. v. 2. And how many Ages have paſt ſince the Iſraelitiſh Woman's Son is recorded to have *curſed and blaſphemed the Name of the Lord?* Lev. xxiv. 11. It was a bold Speech of the Prince of *Tyrus*, to ſay, *He was a God, and did ſit in the ſeat of God in the midſt of the Seas*, Ezek. xxviii. 2. And *Nebuchadnezzar* came not much ſhort of him, when he asked *Shadrach, Meſheck* and *Abednego, Who that God was that ſhould deliver them out of his Hand?* Dan. iii. 15. We read alſo in the *New-Teſtament*, how upon St. *Paul*'s preaching at *Antioch*,

tioch, The Jews ſpeaking againſt what he ſaid, contradicting, and blaſpheming, Acts xiii. 45. as did alſo the Jews that were at *Corinth,* Acts xviii. 6.

II. But Almighty God, who hath declared, he will not hold thoſe Guiltleſs that take his Name in vain, much more none of thoſe that blaſpheme it, hath ſufficiently declared, how odious in his ſight this Sin is, by enacting, *Lev.* xxiv. 16. *That whoſoever was guilty of the ſame, ſhould be ſtoned to Death:* Yea he puniſheth even thoſe that give occaſion thereof unto others; as appears from the Words of the Prophet *Nathan* unto *David,* 2 Sam. xii. 14. *Becauſe by this Deed thou haſt cauſed, or given occaſion to the Enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme, the Child that is born unto thee ſhall ſurely die.* 'Tis known what an unhappy End *Fœlix,* Treaſurer to *Julian* (*a*) the Apoſtate, made, who beholding the holy Veſſels belonging to the Church, ſaid, See what precious Veſſels *Mary*'s Son is ſerved with; after which he vomited Blood ſo exceſſively at his blaſphemous Mouth, that he died; as alſo how *Olympius,* (*b*) an Arrian Biſhop, about the Year of our Lord, 510. whilſt he was publickly in the Baths at *Carthage* reproaching, aud blaſpheming the bleſſed Trinity, was burnt to Death by Lightning; with ſeveral like Inſtances we may meet with.

III. This Crime of Blaſphemy was ſo hateful to the Emperour *Juſtinian,* that he ordained, That he that was guilty of it, ſhould be puniſhed with Death; and by the Eccleſiaſtical Laws of *Keneth,* King (*c*) of Scots, *An.* 840, it is provided, That he that blaſphemeth, ſhould have his Tongue cut out: And, however in theſe Days, by reaſon of a decay of Religion, and ſuch ſtrict Juſtice, the Penalty is not always, and every where inflicted: Yet in ſome Places, Blaſphemers are ſtill put to death; in others, condemn'd to the Oars; in ſome Places they are baniſhed; in others, they have their Tongues cut off, or an hole bored through with an hot

(*a*) *Theod.* l. 1. c. 3, 4. (*b*) *Paul. Diacon. Hiſt. Anaſtaſii.*
(*c*) *L. L. Eccl. Kenethi.* l. 7. *Spelm. Concil. an.* 840.

Iron;

Iron; and indeed, 'tis no more than what they ſeem juſtly to deſerve, ſince Blaſphemy is, as it were, ſpeaking Treaſon againſt the Glorious Majeſty of Heaven, whilſt they thus belch out execrable Words againſt God whereby his Deity is reproached, and his Honour undermin'd. Which Blaſphemy, as it is diametrically oppoſed to divine Praiſe, ſo it muſt be obſerved, that both theſe may be as well internal of the Heart, as external of the Mouth: For in God's Omniſciency, there is the Language of the Heart, as well as of the Lip; and there may be Blaſphemy in the one, as well as of the other: For ſo ſaith a pious Author, "If we do not "ſpeak it with our Mouths, yet if we do it in our "Hearts, by thinking any unworthy Thing of him, it "is look'd on by God, who ſees the Heart, as the vi-"leſt Diſhonour.

IV. *Aquinas* (*a*) makes Blaſphemy to conſiſt, either in denying God what juſtly belongs unto him, or aſcribing unto him, what is unbefitting his excellent Majeſty: To which alſo ſome add, aſcribing that unto a Man's ſelf, which is only due to God: And thus the Scribes imagined Chriſt to have blaſphemed, becauſe he told one he had cured of the Palſy, that his Sins were forgiven, *Mat.* ix. 30. ſince God alone can *blot out our Tranſgreſſions*, Iſa. xliii. 25. Now, though as the Sun's illuſtrious Beams are no ways polluted with the Evaporations of the moſt filthy Dunghill; nor the Moon any ways injur'd by the barking of Dogs, or howling of Evening Wolves; ſo the holy Name of God is no ways prejudiced by the moſt impious Blaſphemies of Men, or Devils, *viz.* as to its ſelf, ſo as to loſe any part of its eſſential Purity; yet certainly God's Holy Name (whereby we underſtand himſelf, his Attributes, and whatever relates to him, or repreſents him to us) ought upon any Accounts to be uſed by us with a profound Reverence, and awful Regard.

V. It was a dreadful Curſe pronounced, *Deut.* xxviii. 58, 59. *If thou wilt not obſerve to do all the Words of*

(*a*) *Tho. Aquin.* 2ª. 2æ, qu. 13. p. 35. *Paris.* 1622.

this

this Law, that are written in this Book, that thou may'ſt fear this glorious, and fearful Name, THE LORD THY GOD: *Then the Lord will make thy Plagues wonderful, and the Plagues of thy Seed, even great Plagues, and of long continuance:* And no doubt, ſince we are commanded not ſo much as to take God's Name in our Mouths raſhly, lightly, or in vain, *Exo.* xx. 7. to do the ſame irreverently, muſt be a great Crime; and whilſt all other Creatures do, in their kind, praiſe God, and ſhew forth his Power, Goodneſs, and Wiſdom; how diſhonourable is it for ungrateful Man, *Whom God hath made a little lower than the Angels, and crowned with Glory and Honour; making him to have Dominion over the Works of his Hands, and putting all Things under his Feet; as Sheep, and Oxen, and the Beaſts of the Field; as alſo the Fowl of the Air, and the Fiſh of the Sea, and whatſoever paſſeth through the Paths of the Seas,* Pſal. viii. 5, &c. How baſe is it for him to blaſpheme that holy Name of God, which is ſo excellent in all the Earth? But do thou, O God, *who art over all, bleſſed for evermore,* Rom. ix. 5. Do thou poſſeſs us with a holy Reverence, and due Regard of thy holy Name; *there is not, O Lord, a Word in our Tongues, but lo! Thou knoweſt it altogether,* Pſal. cxxxix. 4. Let us never then preſume ſo far, or audaciouſly to play with, or blaſpheme thy ſacred Name. With what religious Reverence did the trembling Hebrews take the Name of God, the great Tetragrammaton into their Mouths? Nay, ſome (*a*) ſay, That only the high Prieſt, and that too in the Temple, and on the Day of Expiation, was held fit to pronounce the ſame. Let not us then, who have received greater Mercies, manifeſt our Gratitude for them leſs than they; but imitate the Famous Mr. *Boyle*, who had ſo profound a Veneration for the Great Lord of Heaven and Earth, that the very Name of God was never, as we are told, (*b*) mentioned by him without a Pauſe, and a viſible Stop in his Diſcourſe.

(*a*) *King's Expoſ. on the Lord's Prayer*, p. 96. *Lond.* 1634.
(*b*) *Fun. Sermon*, p 24.

VI. To

VI. To this Head may be reduced the ill Practice of ſuch as ſet their Mouths againſt Heaven, by prophanely making Holy Writ the Subject of their Mirth, and Drollery, ridiculing Vertue and Religion, and (in as much as in them lies) laughing all Piety out of Countenance, without which, *Cicero* tells us, No Faith could be ſecured, no Society amongſt Men could be preſerved, nor that moſt excellent Vertue of Juſtice it ſelf ſubſiſt: And therefore, to ſpeak looſely, and wantonly about holy Things, or Perſons; to make any thing nearly relating to God and Religion, the Matter of Sport and Mockery; or to turn the Sentences and Phraſes of the Holy Scripture into Jeſt, and Ridicule, is (notwithſtanding the commonneſs thereof) a very great Sin: The Oil, wherewith the Tabernacle, and the Ark of the Teſtimony, and the Prieſts were anointed, was holy; and therefore no Man might put it to any other Uſe, as to anoint his own Fleſh therewith, or make any other like it, after the Compoſition thereof, *Exod.* xxx. 25, 26, *&c.*

SECT. III.

Of raſh and vain Swearing.

I. ANother Grand Offence of this kind is raſh, and vain Swearing, notwithſtanding it may paſs as a genteel, and gracefull Quality, the certain Badge of a brave Spark, and compleat Gentleman, and the infallible Mark of high Gallantry, and fine Breeding: But no conſidering Perſon can think it either ſafe or commendable, thus to interlace his common Diſcourſe with Oaths and Curſes, as if their Words did thereby receive their juſt Balance, and true Cadence, whenas they are ſuch meer Excreſcencies of Speech, as do nothing elſe but encumber and deform it. And tho' ſome be ſo fooliſh as to think, that ſuch Swearing ſerves very properly to ſwell their Language, and make it ſound more full and bluſtering: Yet all pious Perſons muſt account it not a Grace, but a Sin, thus to rend open afreſh

the

the Wounds of their Bleſſed Saviour, and make new Iſſues for his precious Blood to flow out at their ungodly Mouths; audaciouſly challenging the Almighty to damn and to deſtroy 'em; and boldly fetching him, as it were, down from Heaven, to avouch any impertinent Prattle, and concern and engage himſelf in every trivial (*a*) Matter here below.

II. It is true indeed, that although, as *Solon* ſaid, There ought to be ſo great Probity among Men, as to render all Oaths needleſs; yet by reaſon of the Corruption of our Nature, it muſt be confeſt they become, in ſome Caſes, not only lawfull and expedient, but neceſſary too; and therefore the laſt of our XXXIX Articles runs thus: "As we confeſs vain and raſh Swear-"ing is forbidden Chriſtian Men, by our Lord Jeſus "Chriſt, and *James* his Apoſtle; ſo we judge, that "Chriſtian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a Man "may ſwear, when the Magiſtrate requireth in a Cauſe "of Faith and Charity, ſo it be done according to the "Prophet's teaching, in Juſtice, Judgment and Truth: And accordingly we have in the Holy Scriptures, not only Commandments that we muſt, and may, but alſo Forms preſcribed how we are to ſwear, and after what manner, thus *Deut.* vi. 13. x. 20, *Jer.* v. 7. *Iſ.* lxv. 16. *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his Name, and becauſe he is the God of Truth.* Iſ. lxv. 16. *Therefore, whoſoever* (being call'd by the Magiſtrate lawfully thereunto, Ex. xxxii. 8. 1 Kings viii. 31.) *doth take an Oath, muſt not ſwear falſly.* Lev. xix. 12. *but in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righteouſneſs.* Thus hath Almighty God been graciouſly pleaſed to lend us his great Name to ſuch Ends as the manifeſtation, and maintenance of Truth, and Right, and of Order and Peace among Men, allowing us to have Recourſe to his Bar, and cite him, as it were for a Witneſs, whenſoever the Caſe doth either deſerve, or require it; or when we cannot try the Intention of the Heart, or ſhew the Sincerity of our Meaning. Daily experience teſtifies how much

(*a*) *Non vacat exiguis rebus adeſſe Jovi.* Ovid.

much Strife and Controveſie doth ariſe about worldly Affairs; and therefore the Apoſtle ſays, *Heb.* vi. 16. *That ſuch an oath for confirmation is to men an end of all ſtrife*; for then it is to be ſuppoſed they will be more cautious what they ſay.

III. But raſh, heedleſs, and unneceſſary Swearing in ordinary Converſation; or with a profane Boldneſs invoking God's Name, appealing to his Teſtimony, or provoking his Judgment upon any ſlight occaſion, in common Talk, is a Practice ſo bad, That the Heathens, by the very Light of Nature, have openly condemn'd it, and loudly declared againſt it, as derogatory to the Reverence of the Deity, as well as unſuitable to the Integrity of a good, or, the Gravity of a worthy Perſon. 'Seeing, ſaith *(a)* one of them, He that takes an Oath 'doth call God for Witneſs, and propoſeth him for 'Umpire and Voucher of the Things he ſaith; there-'fore to bring in God after this manner, on account of 'Humane Affairs, or which is all one, upon ſmall and 'ſlight Matters, doth imply Contempt of him: Where-'fore, we ought wholly to ſhun Swearing, except upon 'occaſion of the greateſt neceſſity. And it appears from the Precepts they have given, that many more of them were of the ſame Opinion. Now if common Reaſon directed even the wiſer Heathens to forbid Swearing in ordinary Converſation, or about trivial Matters, as an irrational and immoral Practice, unbecoming ſober and diſcreet Perſons, then Chriſtians certainly muſt needs think it much more unbecoming them; it being a direct breach of the Precept of Chriſt himſelf, *Mat.* v. 34, &c. *I ſay unto you, ſwear not at all* (*i. e.* in your ordinary Communication) *neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footſtool: Neither by Jeruſalem, for it is the City of the great King. Neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head, becauſe thou canſt not make one hair white or black*: So likewiſe ſaith the Apoſtle *James*, *Jam.* v. 12, *Above all things, my Brethren, ſwear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but*

(a) *Simpl. in Epict.* c. 44. Ὄγας ἔχος, &c.

lest

let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay: leſt ye fall into condemnation: *i. e.* Whatſoever you have to affirm, affirm it ſimply without an Oath; and what you have to deny, do it ſo likewiſe.

IV. No wonder therefore the flying Roll, the Prophet mentions, *Zech.* v. 2, 3. (*i. e.* a quick and inevitable Curſe) doth ſurprize the Swearer, and cut him off: No wonder ſo many remarkable Inſtances occur in Hiſtory of ſignal Vengeance inflicted on ſuch Perſons: No wonder that a common, and allowed Practice thereof, ſhould fetch down publick Judgments; and that, as the Prophets of old did proclaim, *Jer.* xxiii. 10. *Hoſ.* iv. 3. *Becauſe of Swearing a Land mourneth:* It being ſo great a Diſhonour to Almighty God, of whom the common Swearer muſt needs have a very low, and mean eſteem, whilſt he dares ſolemnly invoke the great Creator and Governour of the World, to judge and concern himſelf in the moſt trifling Matters; yea, ſometimes ſuch fooliſh Things, as a wiſe, and conſidering Perſon, would be aſhamed ſo much as to mention.

V. For an Oath is a religious (*a*) and neceſſary Confirmation of things doubtful, by a ſolemn Invocation of God to witneſs what we aſſert, by his Mercy and Favour to us, if it be true; or by his Vengeance upon us if it be falſe: And Swearing is repreſented in Scripture as an eſpecial piece of Worſhip and Devotion towards God: *I have ſworn by my ſelf, ſaith God, that unto me every knee ſhall bow, and every tongue ſhall ſwear*, *Iſa.* xlv. 23. and again, *Iſa.* xlviii. 1. *Hear ye this, O houſe of Jacob, which are called by the name of Iſrael, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which ſwear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Iſrael.* Yea, it ſeems often by a Synecdoche to be put for the whole Worſhip of God; as *Pſal.* lviii. 2. *The King ſhall rejoyce in God, every one that ſweareth by him ſhall glory, but the mouth of them that ſpeak lyes ſhall be ſtopped*: where Swearing by him is generally expounded to be worſhipping God aright: Thus alſo, *Jer.* iv. 1, 2. *If thou wilt*

(*a*) *Aquin.* 2ª, 2æ. qu. 89. *Calv. Inſtit.* l. 2. p. 73. *Cic. de Offic.* l. 3. p. 142. *Lond.* 1629.

return,

return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove: And thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righteousness. So likewise by the Prophet *Isaiah*, the Lord foretels there should be a time, when *he that blessed himself in the earth, should bless himself in the God of Truth; and he that did swear in the earth, should swear by the God of truth, Isa.* lxv. 16. where, by Blessing and Swearing, some will have intended the whole Worship of God: As also, *Isa.* xix. 18. where it is said, *In that day shall five Cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of Hosts.*

VI. So that we see Swearing is a more solemn Thing than some Persons may perhaps at first imagine: It is, when duely performed, a pious Acknowledgement of God's chief Attributes, and singular Prerogatives: That he is every where present, and knows all we say, and do: That his Goodness and Fidelity engage him to favour Truth, and protect right; as well as his Justice to reward Veracity and Equity, and avenge and punish Iniquity and Falshood; and consequently, that it ought never to be made use of, but in just Causes, and weighty *(a)* Matters, in a grave and solemn manner, with a Mind framed to earnest Attention, and furnished with devout Affections. For it is not only an assuming the great and glorious Name of Almighty God, and applying it to countenance, and confirm what we say: It is not only a calling him to witness the Truth of our Words, and Sincerity of our Meaning; but it is also a formal Appeal unto him, as a most upright Judge, an engaging him to be the Avenger of our Violation of Faith or Truth, (2 *Kings* vi. 31.) and a binding our Souls with a most strict Obligation to undergo the Issue of his Judgment about what we affirm: And therefore in Swearing, great caution is absolutely necessary, that we neither rudely prostitute God's holy Name to vile or mean Uses; nor abuse his Authority to countenance Falshoods and Impertinences; nor rashly throw our Souls into those unavoidable Dangers, which such a bold Provocation of his Justice will bring upon us.

(a) Nec Deus interfit nisi dignus vindice nodus.

VII. The Advice *Pythagoras* gave, was *(a)* Never to ſwear but with a great deal of Reverence and Concern: And no doubt it muſt argue the moſt inſolent Preſumption, vainly to toſs about that great and terrible Name of the mighty Creator, Lord, and Judge of the whole World, which all Heaven doth adore with the moſt profound Submiſſion, and reverential Awe. For, ſince all other Acts of Devotion are not to be performed, but with a ſerious Conſideration, and humble Reverence; for Men to dare to uſe this grand one, eſpecially without any reſpect or fear, upon every ſlight or vain Occaſion, is ſuch a horrible mockery, and abuſe of a moſt ſacred Ordinance, as can never be reckoned by ſober Perſons a Grace, or an Accompliſhment. The *Jews* are of Opinion, *(b)* That the Sin of that *Iſraelite* which was ſtoned for Blaſphemy, *Lev.* xxiv. 23. was only this, That he named that ineffable Name of Four Letters, *Jehovah*; and ſhall their fear keep them from once mentioning the dreadful Name of God, and ſhall not our fear keep us from abuſing it? God forbid: And much more, God forbid, that among Chriſtians any ſuch Wretch ſhould again be found, as that Mr. *Bolton*, in a Sermon of his, tells us he knew, who not only in his Life-time was very much addicted to this Sin of vain Swearing, but on his Death-bed too (though himſelf ſwore all the while as faſt, and furiouſly as he could) deſired the Standers-by to help him to new and freſh Oaths, and to ſwear along with him.

VIII. Beſides, ſuch vain Swearing is not only very diſhonourable and injurious to God, and very repugnant to Religion and Piety; but it is alſo very prejudicial to Humane Society: *Cicero*, ſpeaking of the *Romans*, *(c)* ſaith, That their Anceſtors had no band to conſtrain, or engage Faith and Truth, more ſtrictly than an Oath; upon a due and awful regard to which the Security of Government, Deciſion of Right, and Preſervation of Peace doth very much depend: There being no ſurer Bond by which the Conſciences of Men can be obliged to the Atteſtation of Truth, and Obſervation of Faith, than this:

(a) Σέβου ὅρκον. *(b)* *Biſhop* Hall's *Works*, London 1625. p. 476. *(c)* *Nullum vinculum, &c.* *Cic.* l. 3. *de Offic.* p. 145. *Lond.* 1629.

But

But then, as theſe Bonds are, by rare and reverent Uſe, kept faſt and firm; ſo by uſing of them frequently, and heedleſly and proſtituting them upon every trivial account, or light matter, they become very much ſlackned, if not quite diſſolved. Thoſe who make Swearing every where their common Practice, will ſcarce be accounted ſerious therein before the Magiſtrate, or in the Court; this Cuſtom will cauſe a general diffidence, and miſtruſt among Men: And render the ſureſt Pledges they can give of their Fidelity inſignificant and uſeleſs.

IX. It is alſo a very ungenteel, and unmannerly Practice: 'Tis ſaid of Prince *Henry*, Son to King *James* I. That he was never heard by any Body to ſwear an Oath: And it was remembred at his Funeral Sermon by the Archbiſhop, That he being commended by one for not replying with Paſſion in Play, or Swearing to the Truth; made anſwer, 'That he knew no Game, or Value to be won or loſt, that could be worth an Oath: He was far from eſteeming this a Mark of fine Breeding, or Gentility, or a ſign of Ingenuity, and good Manners, but rather an inſolent Defiance, both to the Laws of God and Man, which abſolutely condemn and forbid it; as well as a groſs Rudeneſs towards thoſe, who retain any ſenſe of Goodneſs or Piety, any reverence for God's Name, or concern for his Honour: To whom certainly ſuch Language muſt needs be very diſguſtful and offenſive. Perſons, by how much the better they are born or bred, by ſo much the more ſhould they ſhun and diſdain to ſpeak, as well as do, any thing that is unworthy themſelves, or unbeſeeming: Much leſs ſhould they debaſe themſelves to inſult, after ſo ignominious a manner, over the received Laws, and general Notions of Mankind, in ſuch baſe and ſordid Language, as becomes not the very ſcum and dregs of the People.

X. Again, this Practice derogates very much from the Swearer's Credit, as rendring the Truth of whatever he ſays, ſuſpected, and that not unjuſtly: Since he implies himſelf not to be, even in his own Opinion, a credible Perſon, whilſt he thinks his own bare Affirmation not worthy of belief. It was St. *Jerom*'s Advice, That every (*a*) Man

(*a*) *Tantus in te ſit veri amor, ut quicquid dixeris juratum putes.* Hier.

ſhould be ſo great a lover of Truth, as that whatever he ſaid, ſhould paſs as well, as if he had ſworn it: And indeed, as an honeſt Man's Word is authentick enough, without an Oath to ſupport it, ſo nothing doth more leſſen or impair a Man's Credit, and make what he ſays more ſuſpected, than ſuch raſh and common Swearing to confirm it: It being not to be doubted, but that he, who for neither Honour, Pleaſure, nor Profit, dare ſin againſt God, will for his own Intereſt or Advantage treſpaſs againſt his his Neighbour. 'Tis a common Saying, *He that will Swear, will Lye*; the Truth whereof, how unwilling ſoever a Man may be to believe, yet it cannot be denied but that frivolous Oaths are very ſuperfluous, and unneceſſary in the Mouth of a worthy Perſon: For the Word of a Man of good Credit and Reputation, will eaſily paſs without any further Aſſurance; whereas, if his Veracity or Integrity be once doubted, his Oath (eſpecially when thus obtruded, and thruſt in) will very little be relied upon, if at all. For, according to St. *Chryſoſtome*'s Obſervation, An Oath doth not make a Man credible, but the Teſtimony of his Life, and the Uprightneſs of his Converſation: And, as he preſently adds, 'Many have almoſt burſt with 'Swearing, and perſwaded no Man; whilſt others only 'by a nod have been ſooner believed, than thoſe who have 'ſwore ſo very much. Thus the Eſſenes (*a*) among the *Jews*, were of ſuch repute on this Account, that whatever they ſaid was more valid, than what others ſwore: And 'tis reported (*b*) of *Xenocrates*, that being to give his Teſtimony, and Swear as the Cuſtom was, That he ſpoke nothing but what was true, the Athenians were ſo well ſatisfied, and aſſured of his Integrity, that they would not ſuffer him ſo to do: But granted him the Privilege of teſtifying without ſwearing, which they would not allow to one another. It muſt therefore be a great Diſparagement, as well as Folly, for a Man, by proffering an Oath for Security, to accuſe himſelf as unworthy of Belief: and thereby authorizing, as it were, others to miſtruſt the Truth of what he ſays, and to ſuſpect him not to be of the Number of thoſe good Men *Socrates* deſcribes, who behave themſelves ſo, that their Words need no further Aſſe-

(*a*) *Joſephus.* (*b*) *Diog. Laert. in Xenocr.*

veration

veration to corroborate them, and give them greater weight.

XI. But farther yet, this Sin of rash and vain Swearing, is very apt too too often to lead to the most horrible Sin of Perjury, according to that known Saying, (a) *False Swearing naturally springs out of much Swearing*: He that swears at random, 'tis much but that he is sometimes foresworn, yea, 'tis impossible but that he must be, whilst he swears at a venture, right or wrong. For as a Person that is given to talk very much, will not, without great Difficulty, be kept from triping sometimes with his Tongue: So a Man that makes no account of what he says, Whether it be true or false, will as easily be drawn to Perjury as Lying; but especially when there is Profit or Advantage in the case, then those who are accustomed to swear vainly, will not scruple to swear falsly too. It was therefore good Counsel which St. *Augustine* gave, Not to swear rashly, or in vain at all, lest thereby, first a pronenes to do so be acquired, and then a custom or habit be contracted, which will easily make way for Perjury: For it is a dangerous thing to play with Oaths, which when any one by frequent Use hath made familiar to him, he will then come not to have that reverence for them as he ought, and be too likely to take them without much consideration; which seasonably puts me in mind of shewing the heinousnes and danger of that Sin, that it may the more carefully be avoided.

XII. Now, some there are that make Three kinds of Perjury; First, When a Man confirms upon Oath, that which he knows, or thinks to be otherwise than he says it is: Secondly, When a Man either with relation to things past, or to come, swears contrary to the true Knowledge and Purpose of his own Mind: And, Thirdly, When a Man promiseth upon his Oath to do a thing that is lawful, but doth not do it, though it be in his power so to do. But since all Perjury is a Lye confirm'd by an Oath, it may be reduced to one of these Two Heads, First, Either when somewhat is affirmed; or, Secondly, When somewhat is promised.

XIII. For as to the First of these, when a Man says such, or such a thing is, or was done so and so, and con-

(a) *Phil. Jud. in Decal.*

firms this Aſſertion of his with an Oath, whilſt in the mean time he knew what he affirmed not to be true, this is flat Perjury, and a downright being forſworn: Nay, ſays the pious Author of the *Whole Duty of Man*, (*a*) 'If 'I ſwear to the Truth of that whereof I am only doubt-'ful, though the Thing ſhould happen to be true, yet it 'brings upon me the Guilt of Perjury; for I ſwear at a 'venture, and the Thing might, for ought I know, be as 'well falſe as true, whereas I ought never to ſwear any 'Thing, the Truth of which I do not certainly know. And as thus it is in affirming, ſo likewiſe in promiſing too: If a Man take an Oath in a Senſe different from that in which he knows the Perſon, to whom he makes the Promiſe, underſtands it; or if at the time of taking it, he hath no real Deſign or Intention of making it good; Or, though he were never ſo ſincere, when he took it, yet if afterwards he do not perform it, (the Thing being neither unlawful, nor impracticable) he is certainly perjur'd and forſworn.

XIV. One of thoſe commendable Vertues which the Pſalmiſt aſcribes to the faithful Man, and him that feareth God, *Pſal.* xv. 4. is, not to falſifie his Oath, though perhaps it may be to his own Hurt or Damage: And however *Lyſander*, General of the Lacedemonians (*b*), is ſaid to have cared for an Oath no longer than it would ſerve for his purpoſe; yet the Princes of *Iſrael*, after they had ſworn, and given their Faith to the *Gibeonites*, not to deſtroy them, *Joſh.* ix. 19. would in no wiſe retract, or go from what they had ſworn, not even when they found how they had been beguiled, and deceived by them: Neither was that Roman Conſul *Attilius* (*c*) *Regulus*, leſs famous for his Faithfulneſs in keeping his Word to his Enemies, though it were to the Loſs of his Life: For having been taken by the Carthaginians, and ſent to *Rome* to adviſe an exchange of Priſoners, he perſwaded the contrary in the Senate, and then (having ſworn to return, if ſuch an Exchange was not agreed to) for his Oath's ſake he went back to his Enemies, though he knew they would (as indeed they did) moſt barbarouſly put him to death. Beſides, God's Holy Name is no ways more diſhonoured

(*a*) *Whole Duty of Man*, *Lond.* 1705. p. 91, 92. *Sund.* 4 *D.* 1.
(*b*) *Plutarch.* (*c*) *Val. Max.* l. 1. c. 1. p. 6. *Amſtel.* 1650.

than

than by Perjury: For in all Oaths, he being solemnly called to attest the Truth of what is spoken: If the same be not true, then the Person thus invoking Him, must be supposed either not to believe that God Almighty knows, whether he speaks true or not, (which robs him of his Attribute of Omniscience, and supposes him as easy to be deceived, and put upon, as foolish and ignorant Man): or else that God is willing to Countenance a Falsehood, which, (*since 'tis impossible for God to lye himself*, Heb. vi. 18, *or approve it in another*, Rev. xxi. 8.) is to make him no God at all, but rather like him, *who is a Liar, and the Father of it*, John viii. 44. And what greater Affront can be offer'd him, than this?

XV. So that Perjury being such a dishonouring of God's Name in the highest Degree, 'tis no wonder it hath been so frequently forbid by him, and so severely punished. *Ye shall not swear falsly by my Name*, saith God, *neither shall ye prophane it*, Lev. xix. 12. which also is prohibited whensoever he tells us, *we are not to take his Name in vain*, Ex. xx. 7. Deut. ix. 11, *&c.* i. e. not swear in, or by his Name to a falshood, *Psal.* xxiv. 4. a Sin most odious in God's sight, as appears from those Words of the Prophet, *Jer.* vii. 9, 10. *Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsly; and come and stand before me in this House which is called by my Name?* And again, *Malac.* iii. 5. *I will come near to you to Judgment, and I will be a swift Witness against the Sorcerers, and against the Adulterers, and against false Swearers, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts.* Yea the Punishment is to extend even to the utter Destruction, not only of the Person forsworn, but of his House (*a*) also: Thus *Zech.* v. 4. where by a flying Roll is represented the Curse that should speedily overtake Thieves & Swearers, *I will bring it forth saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the House of the Thief, and into the House of him that sweareth falsly by my Name, and it shall remain in the midst of his House, and shall consume it, with the Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof.*

XVI. Neither are such Punishments threaten'd only, but we read how they have been inflicted too: Thus for Instance, concerning such as, according to the Psalmist's

(*a*) *In prolem dilata ruunt perjuria Patris*, &c. Claudian.

Words, *have ſworn deceitfully*, Pſal. xxiv. 4. or as the Prophet expreſſeth it, *Hoſ.* x. 4. *have ſworn falſly in making a Covenant*: We find, that as the breaking and violation of *Joſhua*'s Oath unto the *Gibeonites* by *Saul*, was the occaſion of ſuch a Famine, as, at the end even of three Years, could not be ſtopt but by the Death of Seven of *Saul*'s Kindred, 2 *Sam.* xxi. 1, *&c.* So likewiſe we read how the Perjury, and Treachery of *Hoſhea*, King of *Iſrael*, towards the King of *Aſſyria*, was the Ruine of himſelf, and his People, 2 Kings. xvii. 4. And the ſame perfidious Behaviour of *Zedekiah*, King of *Judah*, towards the King of *Babylon*, was attended with the Slaughter of his Sons before his Eyes, (which were afterwards put out) the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the Captivity of the perjur'd King, and People, 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 13, *&c. Jer.* lii. 3, *&c.* Both the Kingdoms of *Iſrael*, and *Judah* being deſtroyed for their Breach of Faith, and falſifying their Oaths. Which Sins alſo in all ſucceeding Ages have been very exemplarily puniſhed, as by many Inſtances might be made appear; but there is one ſo very remarkable, as not to be paſſed over in ſilence; and it is that of *Vladiſlaus*, King of *Hungary*, (a) who having made and ſolemnly ſworn a Truce with the Turk; the Pope's Legate (upon a ſeeming Advantage) abſolv'd him of his Oath, and drew him into the Field; where Victory ſeeming to incline to the Chriſtians, *Amurath* the Turkiſh Emperor pull'd out of his Boſom the Articles of Peace, and lifting up his Eyes to Heaven, uttered theſe Words, 'O Jeſus 'Chriſt, theſe are the Leagues which thy Chriſtians 'have made, and confirmed by ſwearing by thy Name, 'and yet have broken them again: If thou art a God, 'as they ſay you be, revenge this Injury offered both to 'thee, and me, and puniſh theſe perjur'd Truce-breakers. Which Words were ſcarce out of his Mouth, when the Chriſtians began to give ground, and preſently after, *Vladiſlaus* himſelf was ſlain, his whole Army routed, and Multitudes of 'em put to the Sword.

XVII. In ſhort, Nature it ſelf directed the very Heathens to believe, that God would not ſuffer perjur'd Perſons to go unpuniſhed; whence they ſtiled him, The In-

(a) Knolles's *Hiſt. of the Turks*; *in the Life of* Amurath. II.

ſpector into Oaths, and Avenger of Perjury; affirming, That every fifth (*a*) Day, the Furies walked their Rounds to puniſh thoſe that were guilty of it: Where, by theſe Furies, ſome will have meant thoſe Prickings, and Gripings, thoſe Stings, and Laſhes of guilty Conſciences, wherewith ſuch wicked Perſons are continually tormented: Nay, they had ſuch a Value for the obſervance of Oaths, that they ſet a Penalty upon their Deities themſelves, who having ſworn by *Styx*, (*a*) forſwore themſelves. Neither indeed ought thoſe, who are guilty of this Sin, to think that God cannot find them out; for if they are not immediately puniſhed for it, as ſome have been; and if Sentence againſt ſuch evil Practices be not always executed ſpeedily, *Eccleſ.* viii. 11. *yet let not the Hearts of the Sons of Men be fully ſet in them thus to do Evil*; For ſooner or later, God will puniſh the ſame; and therefore certainly it highly concerns all Perſons to avoid a Sin of ſo hainous a Nature as Perjury.

XVIII. But, to return, *vain and raſh Swearing* is a Sin likewiſe, to which there is no manner of Temptation, nor any of thoſe Allurements other Sins pretend to: The reſt ſeem in ſome ſort excuſable before Men (the Men I ſay of this World) in reſpect either of Pleaſure, Profit, Credit, *&c.* but this is ſuch a nonſenſical piece of Wickedneſs, as neither the love of Profit, or Pleaſure, nor the deſire of Honour, or Glory, can put Men upon it, ſince it brings none of theſe along with it; and conſequently is the more unpardonable: No Senſe is hereby gratified, no Advantage procured, no Honour obtained, and what then can manifeſt a more prodigious Contempt of God, than thus to provoke him, without any thing at all to entice, or encourage us ſo to do? The Divine Mr. *Herbert* therefore, exhorting not to take his Name, who made our Mouths, in vain, adds this ſtrong Reaſon: (*b*) "It gets thee "Nothing, and hath no Excuſe: Luſt and Wine plead a "Pleaſure; Avarice, Gain; but the cheap Swearer, thro' "his open Sluce, lets his Soul run for nought. The voluptuous Epicure enjoys ſome Pleaſure; the griping Extortioner acquires ſome Gain in lieu of their Souls; but

(*a*) *Heſiod.* (*b*) Herbert's *Temple, or Sacred Poems*, Lond. 1695. p. 3.

the

the common Swearer is the Devil's true Voluntier, he ſerves him, and that very vigorouſly too, without any Wages at all: *He ſells himſelf to him for Nothing*, Iſa. lii. 3. and hazards the Salvation of his Soul, he knows not why nor wherefore.

XIX. Beſides, ſuch Oaths are, as they are commonly uſed, ſo impertinent, and ſuperfluous, that a Man of Senſe ſhould be aſhamed, one would think, ſo frivolouſly to laviſh away his Time, and ſquander away his Breath without any Reaſon, or Neceſſity at all: For in ordinary Converſation, between Man and Man, there is no need of an Oath to confirm that which is apparently true, and certain; and whatſoever is not ſo, will not bear one; and if Perſons want expletive Phraſes to fill up Sentences, and embelliſh their Diſcourſe, certainly they might find ſome better, and more innocent way to do it, than thus to hale into their idle, and inſignificant Talk the ſacred and venerable Name of God, when they think not of him, nor mean any thing concerning him. Whether therefore this unaccountable Practice proceeds from prophane Boldneſs, or a wanton levity of Mind; from arrogant Conceit, or apiſh Imitation; from a ſilly Humour, to comply with a ſinfull Faſhion, and an obſequious Proclivity to follow a diſſolute Multitude in Evil, for fear of diſobliging them, and appearing ſingular: Or whether it owes its riſe to ſtupid Inadvertency, or the violent Tranſports of head-ſtrong and unruly Paſſion; it muſt ſtill be confeſt to come from want of Conſcience, and Diſcretion, as well as of due Reverence to Almighty God, and regard to the Welfare of a Man's Soul. The common Swearer therefore muſt not think to excuſe himſelf by ſaying he was provoked, or in a Paſſion, or enraged, &c. for this is bringing one Crime to juſtifie another; and for him to ſay, he dropt out an Oath before he was aware, without minding what he ſaid, this ſhews plainly he hath not yet learnt that ſhort Leſſon of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xxxix. 1. *To take heed to his Ways, that he ſin not with his Tongue, and to keep his Mouth as it were with a Bridle.* And as fooliſh is it to think to excuſe the Matter by the Seldomneſs of it, (which Plea will not ſerve for Adultery, Fornication, Theft, or other Sins, to which there are greater Temptations) *For a Man that ſets a Watch before his Mouth, and keeps the Door*

of

of his Lips as he ought, Pſal. cxli. 3. will ſo carefully conſider the Nature, and Conſequence of his Words, as not to ſwear at all, either to vent his Paſſion, adorn his Diſcourſe, or Humour, and comply with his Company; for he knows how apt this Sin is to get ground, if never ſo little allowed.

XX. It behoves therefore all thoſe as have kept themſelves hitherto free from *raſh and vain Swearing*, to keep themſelves ſo ſtill, without yielding to the leaſt beginnings thereof; as well as ſuch as have till now been addicted to it, immediately to caſt it off; and one would think it might be no hard Matter (*a*) ſo to do: It is but willing, and ſtedfaſtly reſolving on it, and the Thing is done: It requires no Sweat, or Pain, no Art, or Hazard, only a little Care and Circumſpection; and the difficulty of getting rid of ſuch an ill Cuſtom, ſhould be ſo far from making them remiſs, that it ought rather to make them ſet about it with the more Earneſtneſs and Speed, leſt that Difficulty turn to an Impoſſibility at laſt: Such a continued Cuſtom will become a ſecond Nature; and we know who it was ſaid, *Jer.* xiii. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin? or the Leopard his Spots?* Then may ye alſo do Good that are accuſtomed to do Evil. To that End let them ſeriouſly conſider, that however the commonneſs of this Sin may make it paſs for a ſmall one, yet it is very far from being ſo, either in it ſelf, or God's Account, out of whoſe Favour it caſts the common Swearers at preſent, and will, if continued in, caſt them into Hell for evermore: Let them alſo inure themſelves to ſpeaking Truth. *Solon* was wont to ſay, 'Men ſhould be ſo honeſt, and 'ſuch Lovers of Truth, that there ſhould be no occaſion 'at all for their Swearing: And indeed, when a Man is known always to ſpeak nothing but what is right, he will eaſily be believed on his bare Word; and conſequently there will be no need of an Oath, to render what he ſays more credible. Let them likewiſe with the greateſt Diligence, and Caution, avoid whatſoever may betray them to this Sin; and keep a ſtrict and conſtant Watch over all their Words: Let them imprint in their Minds, that no-

(*a*) Εἰπέ μοι, ποίαν δυσκολίαν, &c. *Chryſoſt.*

thing

thing but pure Neceſſity can juſtifie an Oath, (*a*) as the vindicating God's Honour, promoting our Neighbour's Good, &c. Let them always preſerve a deep and profound Veneration for God's Name, never mentioning it but with the greateſt Reſpect imaginable, (which will be an excellent Means to prevent the prophaning it by unlawful Oaths) and let them earneſtly deſire Almighty God to make them throughly ſenſible of the Hainouſneſs of this Sin, and give them Grace to avoid it: And do thou, O Eternal God, who art moſt worthy of Honour and Adoration, do thou mercifully grant that we may always acknowledge thy Name to be great, wonderful and holy, and carefully ſhun whatſoever may any ways tend to debaſe, or diſhonour thy glorious Majeſty, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

PART II. SECT. I.

Of falſe Accuſing, or bearing falſe Witneſs.

I. COme we now in the ſecond Place, to ſhew how we are to Bridle our Tongues in reſpect to our Neighbour, whoſe Credit we are not to leſſen, or impair by any Means, and are therefore carefully to avoid, *All falſe Accuſation, or bearing falſe Witneſs*, when a Man ſolemnly teſtifies ſomething of another, which he very well knows to be directly falſe; which is the greateſt Baſeneſs in the World, and of all Sins the moſt Diabolical, as being a Conjunction of Lying, and Malice, two of the moſt eſſential Properties of Satan, whoſe peculiar Title is to be *The Accuſer of the Brethren*, Rev. xii. 10. *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs againſt thy Neighbour* is one of thoſe X Commandments God delivered with *Thundrings and Lightnings*, Ex. xx. 16, 18. where we are forbid to bring in, or bear falſe Witneſs againſt any, or give any malicious Teſtimony, whether in publick or private: So that the Advice St. *John* gave to the Soldiers, *Luke* iii. 14. is very good for all to follow, *viz. Not to accuſe any falſly; which may be done;*

(*a*) *Calv. Inſtit.* l. 2. c. 8. p. 74. col. 1. 2. *Genev.* 1592.

2. Either

II. Either by openly avowing a downright Falſhood in the Courts of Juſtice, before a Magiſtrate, &c. Thus was Innocent *Naboth* ſerved, 1 *Kings* xxi. he had a Vineyard near the Palace of *Ahab*, King of *Samaria*, which the King deſired to have of him, for a Garden for himſelf: but becauſe all alienation of Inheritances was expreſly forbidden, (*Lev.* xxv. 23. *Numb.* xxxvi. 7. *Ezek.* xlvi. 18.) *Naboth* therefore refuſed to part with the Inheritance of his Fathers: Upon which *Ahab* grew very ſad, and diſcontented, till *Jezebel* his Wife coming unto him, promiſed to accompliſh, and bring about what he deſired: Accordingly ſhe ſent Letters in *Ahab*'s Name to the Magiſtrates, and chief Men of *Jezrel* were *Naboth* dwelt, commanding them to get falſe Witneſſes to accuſe *Naboth* of Blaſphemy, that ſo he being ſtoned to death for the ſame, *Ahab* might take Poſſeſſion of the Plat of Ground; all which was done according to her Order: yea, they did proceed ſo far as to ſtone his Children to death too, perhaps that none might be left to lay claim to the Vineyard, 2 *Kings* ix. 26. Now this muſt needs be acknowledged to be a moſt crying Sin, and an abominable piece (*a*) of Wickedneſs, of which whoſoever is Guilty doth a moſt outrageous Injuſtice to his Neighbour; and tho' it reach only to his Credit, yet it is ſuch a Crime as can ſcarce ever be atoned for: Becauſe, as *Solomon* calls, ſuch *A Man that beareth falſe Witneſs againſt his neighbour, a maul, and a ſword, and a ſharp arrow*, *Prov.* xxv. 18. So ſuch a grievous Wound may be thereby given, as may prove very difficult, if not impoſſible, to be cured by any thing that can be done after.

III. Or the ſame may be done by a malicious perverting the Words and Meaning of another. Hence thoſe that witneſſed againſt our Saviour, that he ſhould ſay, He would deſtroy the Temple, and within Three Days build it up again, are by the Evangeliſts called Falſe Witneſſes, *Mat.* xxvi. 60, 61. *Mark* xiv. 57, 58. (altho' it was true Chriſt ſpoke thoſe Words) becauſe they wreſted them to another Meaning, as if he had ſpoke of the Material Temple made with Hands; when as by Temple our Saviour un-

(*a*) *Hoc præceptum Officii diligenter tenendum eſt, nè quem unquam innocentem judicio capitis accerſas: id enim ſine ſcelere fieri nullo pacto poteſt.* Cic. Offic. l. 2. p. 87. Lond. 1629.

derſtood

derſtood his Body, which was the true Temple, wherein the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt, *Col.* ii. 9. *Deſtroy this Temple,* ſaith our Saviour, *John* ii. 19. *and in Three Days I will raiſe it up:* Where he ſpake, ſaith St. *John*, *v.* 21. of the Temple of his Body. And accordingly, when he was riſen from the Dead, his Diſciples remembred that our Saviour had ſaid this unto them; *and they believed the Scripture, and the Word which Jeſus had ſaid,* v. 22. Thus alſo the Enemies of the Goſpel, when they were not able to reſiſt the Wiſdom and the Spirit by which St. *Stephen* ſpake, ſuborned Men which ſaid, *We have heard him ſpeak blaſphemous Words againſt Moſes, and againſt God. And they ſtirred up the People, and the Elders, and the Scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the Council; And ſet up falſe Witneſſes, which ſaid, This Man ceaſeth not to ſpeak blaſphemous Words againſt this holy Place, and the Law: For we have heard him ſay, that this Jeſus of Nazareth ſhall deſtroy this Place, and ſhall change the Cuſtoms which Moſes delivered us,* Acts vi. 10, 11. *i. e.* They hired theſe Men to accuſe him falſly, and make Complaint to the *Sanhedrim*, that they had heard him ſpeak diſhonourably of the *Jewiſh* Religion; continually foretelling Deſtruction to the Temple, and threatning the Change or Abolition of all the *Moſaical* Rites and Ceremonies.

IV. Now tho' this be a great Sin, thus to accuſe any falſly; yet, God knows, too too often Perſons may be found, who, out of Pride or Envy, out of Covetouſneſs or Malice, become guilty of the ſame. Sometimes out of Pride: Thus wicked *Haman*, becauſe one *Jew* refuſed to give him more Reſpect than belonged to him, *Eſther* iii. 2, *&c.* malicioufly and falſly accuſed the whole People, as Diſturbers of the Commonwealth, and Breakers of the Laws of King *Ahaſuerus*; who having commanded all Perſons to bow, and reverence that proud Agagite, *Mordecai* refuſed ſo to do; probably, becauſe the Worſhip or Reverence here required was more than was meet to be paid to a Man. For as many other Heatheniſh Kings, ſo likewiſe were the *Perſian* Monarchs reverenced by their Subjects with a kind of Divine Service or Honour; and this *Ahaſuerus* might require to be paid to his Favourites. Which implies that it was ſome unuſual Reverence, more than was ordinarily given by an Inferior to a Superior; and ſuch as the People would

would not have afforded, had not the King enjoin'd it. Or perhaps *Mordecai* might refuſe to honour *Haman* thus, becauſe he was of that Stock or Kindred whoſe Remembrance God would have put out, *Exod.* xvii. 14. blotted out from under Heaven, *Deut.* xxv. 19. and utterly deſtroyed, 1 *Sam.* xv. 3. For we read, *Eſther* 3. 4. how *Mordecai*, to excuſe himſelf, had told the King's Servants that he was a *Jew*. But however it was, as nothing more ſtirs up the Choler of proud Men than a ſeeming Contempt of them; ſo *Haman*, when he perceived this, was full of Wrath: But, in the Height of his Mind, thinking it too ſmall a Matter to execute his Wrath on one ſingle Man alone, he was for deſtroying all the *Jews* that were in the whole Kingdom; and to that End, falſly accuſed them before *Ahaſuerus*, as People that did not obſerve his Laws, and therefore were not to be ſuffer'd to live. 'Twas true indeed, the Kings Laws and Decrees about Matters of Divine Worſhip they did not keep, becauſe with a good Conſcience they could not; but thoſe which related to the King's Safety, or the Peace and Security of the Kingdom, they ſtrictly obſerved: For this very *Mordecai* himſelf, whom *Haman* would have ſacrificed to his Pride, had not long before ſaved the King's Life, by diſcovering a Plot of Two of his Chamberlains to take it way, *Eſth.* ii. 21, 22.

5. Sometimes again, Envy (which is a Grief of Mind at another's Proſperity) puts Men upon committing this Sin. Thus we read, *Dan.* vi. 3, *&c.* that when *Darius* had preferr'd *Daniel* above the Preſidents and Princes, (becauſe an excellent Spirit was in him) and had ſome thoughts of ſetting him over the whole Realm, as his Vice-Roy: The Preſidents and Princes, moved with Envy at his Advancement, ſought to find occaſion againſt *Daniel* concerning the Affairs of the Kingdom, and his Adminiſtration of them: But ſuch was his Care and Fidelity, that no fault could be found in him: Then ſaid they, We ſhall not find any Occaſion againſt this *Daniel*, except we find it againſt him concerning the Law of his God; and accordingly they went to the King, and told him, That all the Preſidents and Governours of the Kingdom (which was falſe, for *Daniel*, the chief of them, was none of their Counſel) had agreed to have a Decree made, That whoſoever ſhould

ask

ask a Petition of any God or Man for Thirty Days, unleſs of him, ſhould be caſt into the Den of Lions, and got the King to ſign it: After which, finding *Daniel* at his uſual Devotion, they accuſed him to the King, as if he had not obſerved the Decree, and that too out of diſrepect to his Majeſty, whom they ſaid, he regarded not, *v.* 13. falſly and maliciouſly accuſing him of Ingratitude, for the Honours *Darius* had conferr'd upon him; of Contempt of his Laws, and a kind of Rebellion: They accuſe him, as the *Jews* did Chriſt, *Luke* xxiii. 2. as being an Enemy to *Cæſar*: Neither would they be ſatisfied until he was caſt into the Lions Den: So true are the Words of *Solomon*, *Prov.* xxvii. 4. *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous: but who is able to ſtand before envy?*

VI. Covetouſneſs is another Spring from whence Sins of this kind do uſually flow; whence we find Men of Truth and hating Covetouſneſs joined together, *Exod.* xviii. 21. For the Paſſage between *Ahab* and *Naboth*, juſt now mentioned, plainly ſhews, That this Vice will eaſily ſtir up thoſe that are poſſeſſed with it, to accuſe another falſly, if it may be for their Advantage ſo to do: Thus we read alſo, 2 *Sam.* xvi. 3. how *Ziba*, a falſe and treacherous Servant, who aim'd at nothing but his own Gain, having a deſire to undermine his Maſter *Mephiboſheth* in his Eſtate, firſt practiſes upon his Fame in a falſe Accuſation, and traduc'd him to *David* as if he had aſpired to be King: And if S. *Paul*'s preaching had no ways tended to the hindring the Gain and Advantage *Demetrius*, and his Fellow-Artificers reaped by making Silver Shrines for *Diana*, they would ſcarce have raiſed ſuch an Uproar againſt that Apoſtle, and his Companions, as we find they did; nor laid ſuch things to their charge, *Act.* xix. 24. *That the love of Money is the root of all Evil*, is affirmed by St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 10. and that in all Ages there have been Knights of the Poſt, (*a*) who if well fed, would ſwear any thing, is too apparent. How was the Continence and Chaſtity of *Euſtathius* (*b*) Biſhop of *Antioch*, and Holy *Athanaſius* Biſhop of (*c*) *Alexandria*, aſſaulted after this manner? Againſt the firſt of theſe the Arrian Hereticks having hired a certain

(*a*) *Non benè conducti vendunt perjuria teſtes.* Ov. Amor. l. 1. El. 10. (*b*) *Niceph.* l. 8. c. 46. (*c*) *ib.* l. 9. c. 23.

Strumpet

Strumpet to ſwear Fornication; and againſt the other a lewd Woman to ſwear a Rape: But certainly ſuch Perſons either never read, or never rightly conſidered the Words of Chriſt, *Mat.* xvi. 26. *What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

VII. Laſtly, Malice (which never regards how true an Accuſation is, but how ſpightful and prejudicial) doth often hurry Perſons on to the committing this Sin: Thus *Joſeph*'s Laſcivious Miſtreſs maliciouſly, and falſly, fixes her own Crime upon him, *Gen.* xxxix. 14. and *Jeremiah*'s Enemies vent their Malice thus, *Jer.* xviii. 18. *Come let us deviſe devices againſt Jeremiah, Come let us ſmite him with the Tongue*, i. e. Let us invent ſome ill Thing or other, and lay to his Charge, and by accuſing him of the ſame, incenſe the higher Powers againſt him, as we find they did, *Jer.* xxvi. 11. ſaying, *This Man is worthy to die, for he hath propheſied againſt this City*; arraigning him as guilty of Sedition, for denouncing God's Judgments by reaſon of their Sins; concerning which Accuſers, probably thoſe Words of the ſame Prophet are to be underſtood, *Jer.* xx. 10. *I heard the defaming of many* [that combined, and conſulted together how by falſe Suggeſtions, and malicious Informations againſt him they might work his Ruine] ſaying, *report, and we will report it*, [i. e. tell us what we ſhall ſay, and we will ſpread it abroad] *peradventure we ſhall prevail againſt him, and we ſhall take our Revenge on him.* In like manner *Maximinus* (*a*) the Tyrant was moved maliciouſly to deface, and deſtroy the Doctrine and Religion of Chriſt in his time: For when he ſaw that Violence and Torments prevailed not, but that, like the Palm, the more it was trodden down, the more it grew, he uſed this ſpightful and ſubtile Method to undermine it: He publiſhed divers Books full of Blaſphemy, of a Conference between Chriſt and *Pilate*, and cauſed them to be taught to Children inſtead of their firſt Rudiments; that ſo they might no ſooner ſpeak, than learn to hate, and blaſpheme Chriſt, God bleſſed for evermore: And not only ſo, but he likewiſe ſuborned certain wicked and lewd Women to affirm, that they were Chriſtians, and

(*a*) *Euſeb.* l. 9. c. 5. *Niceph.* l. 7. c. 27.

that filthy Practices were daily committed by them in their Aſſemblies, which alſo he cauſed to be publiſhed far and near in Writing. How fitly therefore doth the Apoſtle join Malice and Wickedneſs together? 1 *Cor.* v. 8. ſince there is no ſort of Wickedneſs the malicious Man will boggle at. But *(a) Cicero* would have nothing thus done contrary to Juſtice, or out of Malice, to injure another: For albeit *Cato*, tho' Fourſcore times accuſed, came ſtill off with Honour, yet all Perſons may not have the ſame good Luck.

VIII. But certainly from whatſoever Source or Spring this Sin of bearing falſe Witneſs may ariſe, it muſt be acknowledged to be a very great Crime: Hence 'tis ſo often forbid in Holy Writ; as, *Exod.* xxiii. 1. *Thou ſhalt not raiſe a falſe Report, neither ſhalt thou put thine Hand with the Wicked to be an unrighteous Witneſs; neither ſhalt thou bear falſe Witneſs againſt thy Neighbour*, Deut. v. 20. For, as *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* xiv. 5. *a falſe Witneſs will utter Lyes.* And ſince, as he alſo affirms, *Prov.* vi. 19. ſuch *a falſe Witneſs is an Abomination unto the Lord*; no Wonder he adds, *Prov.* xix. v. that *a falſe Witneſs ſhall not be unpuniſhed; and he that ſpeaketh Lyes ſhall not eſcape, but periſh*, ver. 9. And therefore we find ſevere Puniſhments on this Account not only threatned *Doeg*, Pſ. lii. 1, 2, 5. *Amaziah*, Amos vii. 10, 11, 17, *&c.* but inflicted too on many others.

IX. Thus, to look back on the Perſons lately mention'd as guilty of or conſenting to this Sin, proud *Haman* was himſelf hanged on the ſame Gallows he had prepared for *Mordecai*, *Eſth.* vii. 10. The envious Accuſers of *Daniel* were themſelves caſt into the Den of Lions, *Dan.* vi. 24. which ſoon devoured them, tho' they hurt him not in the leaſt. Covetous *Ahab* and *Jezabel* were no ſooner ſeizing upon *Naboth*'s Vineyard, but *Elijah* came to denounce God's Judgments againſt them, 1 *Kings* xxi. 19, 23. that in the Place where Dogs licked the Blood of *Naboth*, they ſhould likewiſe lick the Blood of *Ahab*, and eat *Jezabel* by the Wall of *Jezreel*; as afterwards came to paſs, 1 *Kings* xxii. 38. 2 *Kings* ix. 35. And as for malicious *Maximi-*

(a) Danda eſt opera, ne quid contra æquitatem contendas, ne quid pro injuria. Cic. 2. Offic.

nus,

nus, he was eaten up of Worms, and did rot alive: Which calls to Mind what *Euſebius* (*a*) relates concerning *Narciſſus* Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, a Man of a very godly and blameleſs Life. Three Men conſpired againſt him out of Malice, and charged him with a moſt heinous Crime: The Firſt wiſhing, If it were not true, he might be burnt; the Second, That he might die of the Jaundice; and the Third, That he might loſe his Eye-ſight. Shortly after which, the Houſe of the Firſt was burnt down in the Night, and himſelf and Family conſumed in the Flames; the Second had the Jaundice to ſuch a Degree as kill'd him; and the Third ſeeing this, repented, and confeſſed the Conſpiracy againſt *Narciſſus*, but for all that loſt his Eyes.

X. The *Romans* had a Law, (*b*) That if any Man had accuſed another, either wrongfully, unlawfully, or without Probability, both his Legs were to be broken: And the *Jews* had a Law given them by God himſelf, *Deut.* xix. 16, 17, 18, 19. That if a falſe Witneſs did riſe up againſt any Man, to teſtifie againſt him that which was wrong, then both the Men, before whom the Controverſie was, were to ſtand before the Lord, before the Prieſt, and the Judges, which ſhould be in thoſe Days; and the Judges were to make diligent Inquiſition: And behold, if the Witneſs were a falſe Witneſs, and had teſtified falſly againſt his Brother, then they were to do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his Brother. Thus, as *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* xix. 5, 9. *a falſe Witneſs ſhall not be unpuniſhed, and he that ſpeaketh Lyes ſhall not eſcape*; or, if he do eſcape in this World, he will moſt certainly be puniſhed in the World to come, *Rev.* xxii. 15. Since then a falſe Witneſs is ſo ſure to periſh, *Prov.* xxi. 28. how carefully ought this Sin to be avoided! The Heathen (*c*) Satyriſt would have no Man be guilty of it, tho' it were to ſave his Life; but eſteemed it more eligible to undergo the ſevereſt Torments, than to ſwear that againſt another which he was not fully ſure to be true. And 'tis reported of that famous Orator *Demoſthenes*, (*d*) That being com-

(*a*) *Euſeb. l.* 6. *c.* 7, 8. (*b*) *Euſeb. l.* 5. *c.* 21. (*c*) *Ambigue ſi quando citabere teſtis, Incertæque rei, Phalaris licet imperet, ut ſis falſus*, &c. Juv. Sat. 8. (*d*) *Bruſon. l.* 1. *c.* 16.

manded by the *Athenians* to impeach a certain Perſon, he refuſed; and when ſome therefore cried out againſt him, he roſe up, and ſaid, *Ye Men of* Athens *ſhall have me for your Counſellor, whether ye will or no; but, tho' you deſire it never ſo much, I will never be a falſe Accuſer.* Let not Chriſtians then in Honeſty and Integrity come behind theſe Heathens: But ſince not only in the Law, (as hath been ſhew'd) but in the Goſpel too, *Luke* xviii. 20. this Command, of *not bearing falſe Witneſs*, is ſo earneſtly recommended; let us moſt affectionately deſire Almighty God, to *have Mercy upon us, and* by his Grace *incline our Hearts to keep this Law.*

SECT. II.

Of Calumny, or Slander.

1. THE next Offence of this Nature, that comes under our Conſideration, is Calumny, Slander, or lying Defamation, or a common and publick declaring ſuch falſe Reports, tho' not before a Magiſtrate, yet in the Company of ſuch as are like to carry them farther, and ſpread them abroad; a vain, raſh, and ill-natur'd reporting ſome falſe Thing, which may ſome way or other tend to the Prejudice of another's Safety, Welfare, or Reputation; that *Scourge of the Tongue*, as the Wiſe Man calls it, *Eccluſ.* xxvi. 6. wherewith much deeper Wounds are given than can be by the Sword: It being more pardonable manfully to ſeek to take away another's Life, than baſely to murder his Good-name. *Aquinas* (*a*) defines this Vice to be a falſe and malicious laying any Fault or Crime to another's Charge: Which may be done, either by inventing a perfect Falſhood of him, or, if not inventing, yet reporting it, knowing it not to be true; or elſe by divulging it as an abſolute Certainty, ſo as to perſwade others to believe it, tho' the Perſon thus publiſhing it knows not whether it be true or falſe; and this too is generally attended with bitter Railings and injurious Reproaches,

(*a*) *Criminis impoſitio falſa, & malitioſa.* Aquin. 22. 22. qu. 68. art. 3.

that

that ſo, by the Sharpneſs of the Accuſation, their Calumny may make the greater Impreſſion on the Hearers.

II. From whence it may be perceived how this Vice differs from Detraction, or Backbiting; (of which hereafter) for this is, in its proper Signification, an occult and unjuſt Violation of another's Fame: But Calumny, or Slander, tho' it be an unjuſt, yet it is not an occult or private Violation of another Man's Reputation or Credit. Both of 'em, 'tis true, aim at the ſame End, *viz.* the extinguiſhing or diminiſhing the Repute of another; but they do not both take the ſame Way to accompliſh and bring about this wicked Deſign: The one doing it more openly and publickly, or at leaſt not in ſo clandeſtine and ſecret a Way as the other. And this common and publick uttering of reproachful Speeches, with an Intent of raiſing an ill (*a*) Fame of the Perſon ſo reproached, as it doth for the moſt part proceed from Malice, (it implying Matter either of Crime or Defect) ſo it generally aims at ſome Loſs, Hurt, Prejudice, or Diſadvantage to the Party defamed: And therefore the Slanderer (whilſt he conceals and diſguiſes whatſoever is commendable and Praiſe-worthy) picks up and heaps together all the ill Matter he can find; perverting and diſadvantageouſly miſinterpreting whatſoever comes in his Way, and highly aggravating or partially repreſenting Matters; either by ſuppreſſing and ſmothering whatſoever may ſerve to extenuate or excuſe them, or elſe by ſlily inſtilling ſuch Suggeſtions as may breed ſiniſter and untoward Opinions in ſuch Auditors as are prone and at Leiſure to entertain them.

III. Now this Sin, tho' it be, as will appear, of a moſt vile and baſe Nature, yet in Practice is become as common as any other among all Perſons of whatſoever Rank, Quality, or Condition. The beſpattering others with foul Imputations, is the common Entertainment in moſt Companies; the defaming and abuſing their Neighbours, the moſt faſhionable paſſing away of Time; and the telling malicious Stories of, and faſtning odious Characters upon their Brethren, the moſt pleaſing and acceptable Divertiſement; without ever conſidering whether what they ſay be true or falſe, or what the Conſequence of their mali-

(*a*) *Defamatio eſt in mala fama ponere.* Bartolus J. C.

cious Obloquy may be; how unlawful it is to defame any by way of Sport, to find themſelves or others Talk; or to gratifie a merry Humour with the Loſs or Hazard of their Neighbour's Reputation, as if it was the meereſt Trifle in the World. For, even at thoſe Feaſts and mutual Entertainments ſo common among us, which ought to be like the primitive Love-Feaſts, or Feaſts of Charity, how cuſtomary is this Practice? How few of them are kept, rather with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth, 1 *Cor.* v. 8. than with the old Leaven of Malice and Wickedneſs? Is not the whole Talk concerning this Perſon's Infirmities, or that Perſon's Neceſſities; the Misfortunes of one Neighbour, or Miſcarriages of another? And what a motly Piece is the whole! Firſt, God Almighty's Bleſſing is importun'd; but the Gueſts are no ſooner placed, than they begin to divert themſelves with ſlandering their Neighbours; which holds on 'till Thanks be returned for the Benefits received to the ſame propitious Preſerver of Men, and then (*like the Dog to his Vomit*, or *Sow to the Mire*, 2 Pet. ii. 22.) they return to their Calumnies again. But how abſurd is it, that *out of the ſame Mouth* ſhould proceed *Bleſſing and Curſing*, Jam. iii. 9, 10. and that with the ſame Tongue Men ſhould *bleſs God, even the Father, and* revile *Men which are made after the Similitude of God?* Certainly, as the Apoſtle there ſays, *theſe Things ought not ſo to be:* For the Commonneſs of this ill Practice doth not make it at all the more lawful. As we are forbid to follow a Multitude in doing Evil; ſo, for the like Reaſon, no doubt, we are not allowed to follow a Multitude in ſpeaking Evil one of another, *Exod.* xxiii. 2.

IV. It was the Saying of that moſt excellent Philoſopher *Socrates*, (who, by the Judgment of *Apollo*, was eſteemed the wiſeſt Man upon Earth) (*a*) That *Calumny and Slander have oft cauſed the Death of many good Men.* And when he adds, That *he ſuppoſed his End might be wrought by the ſame Means*; the Event made out that he was not miſtaken: For, becauſe he was chiefly for promoting the Study and Practice of Moral Philoſophy, his Enemies accuſed him of Contempt toward their Gods; for which he

(*a*) Τῶν πολλῶν διαβολὴ, &c. Socrat. in Apolog. apud Platon.

was

was condemned to die, by drinking a Potion of Hemlock. And indeed both Sacred and Prophane Hiſtory aſſure us, that the beſt Perſons have in this kind ſuffered moſt. Was not *Moſes*, the meekeſt Man upon Earth, *Numb.* xii. 3. accuſed by *Korah* and his rebellious Companions, *Numb.* xvi. 3. of Ambition, Tyranny, and Injuſtice? Yea, was not Chriſt himſelf (*who did no Sin, neither was any Guile found in his Mouth*, 1 Pet. ii. 22.) highly ſlandered by the *Phariſees*, &c. when they ſaid he was an Impoſtor, *John* xix. 7. 21. a Blaſphemer, *Mat.* ix. 3. xxvi. 65. a Sorcerer, *Mat.* xii. 24. a Glutton, *Mat.* xi. 19. and Wine-bibber; an Incendiary, and Perverter of the People; one that ſpake againſt *Cæſar*, and forbad to pay Tribute, *&c. Luke* xxiii. 2, 5, 14. *John* xix. 12.? And were not the holy Apoſtles ſerved after the ſame manner, when they were charged of being peſtilent and ſeditious, factious and turbulent Fellows, *Acts* xvii. 6. xxiv. 5.? Yea, even Chriſtianity it ſelf, than which nothing can more diſpoſe Men to live orderly and peaceably, hath been thus baſely repreſented; and, as *Tertullian* (*a*) takes Notice, *If any extraordinary Floods, or other publick Calamities, did appear; then*, Throw the Chriſtians to the Lions, *was the common Cry*: They being ſtill charged and perſecuted as the Cauſes of whatſoever Miſchiefs befel the Commonwealth. To them it was that the Apoſtate *Julian*, and other Pagans, did impute all the Devaſtations and Confuſions that came upon the *Roman* Empire. And the Sacking (*b*) of *Rome* by the *Goths* was ſo maliciouſly caſt upon the Chriſtian Religion, that, to vindicate the ſame, St. *Auguſtine* was forced to write his Books of *the City of God*. By theſe Means was St. *Chryſoſtome* baniſhed, and St. *Jerome* much harraſſed and vex'd; and, among the Heathens, *Ariſtides*, *Epaminondas*, *Scipio*, *Cato*, and many others that were noted for the Practice of Moral Vertues, much troubled.

V. So that the Advice of *Menander*, Not to utter the leaſt Slander, is very good; becauſe, as he there adds, there will be ſoon found too too many that will be ready to aggravate the ſame, and make a moſt heinous Crime of a ſmall Miſcarriage, and a huge Beam of a little Mote, *Mat.* vii. 3. heightning the Faults and Imperfections of

(*a*) *Tertul. Apol.* (*b*) *Aug. de Civ. Dei, l.* 1. *c.* 1. *& l.* 3. *c.* 31.

others firſt, and then charging them with greater Blame, and loading them with more Diſgrace than they deſerve. The worſt of it is, 'tis ſo very difficult, if not impoſſible, to meet with better Uſage; neither is there any Fence or Preſervative againſt a calumniating Tongue: For as no Perſon is wholly exempt from all manner of Defects or Miſdemeanors, (ſince *in many Things we offend all*, Jam. iii. 2.) ſo the common Diſpoſitions of Men ſeem to incline them too too much this Way: And as Slander is a fruitful Vice, and can eaſily find Matter, there being Dirt enough to be found in every Street for thoſe who have a Mind to throw it at their Neighbours; ſo likewiſe hath it a ſtrange metamorphoſing Faculty, and, by turning the wrong End of the Proſpective, ſeldom diſcerns Things as really they are. *Thus the hoſpitable Perſon is repreſented as profuſe, and the prudently frugal as a Niggard. He that is innocently free and pleaſant in his Converſation, the Slanderer terms looſe and vain; and the ſerious and ſteddy, ſeem to him ſullen and moroſe.* *Plutarch* indeed tells us, (*a*) That King *Philip*, by ſending a Preſent to one that ſpoke ill of him, not only ſtopp'd his Mouth, but won his Heart; and was afterwards as much commended by him, as he was defamed before. But the beſt Way, no doubt, to uſe St. *Paul*'s Words, 2 *Cor.* xi. 12. is to *cut off Occaſion from them which deſire Occaſion: Having*, as St. *Peter* exhorts, 1 *Pet.* ii. 12. *your Converſation honeſt; that whereas they ſpeak againſt you as Evil-doers, they may, by your good Works which they ſhall behold, glorifie* Almighty *God*. There is no readier Way to deſtroy the Credit of Slanderers, than to act well and juſtly; to *live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World*, Tit. ii. 12. and to *be wiſe as Serpents, and harmleſs as Doves*, Mat. x. 16. And therefore 'tis reported both of *Plato* and *Chryſippus*, That when they were told ſome Perſons ſpoke ill of them; *'Tis no Matter*, ſaid they, *we will live ſo that no Body ſhall believe them.*

VI. Neither will any wiſe or prudent Perſon ever encourage, liſten to, or entertain ſuch common Diſturbers of Mankind. God hath commanded, *Exod.* xxiii. 1. not to raiſe, or (as it is in the Margin of ſome *Bibles*) not to receive a falſe Report, or not ſo much as to endure the

(*a*) *Plutarch. Apophthegm. p.* 329. *Francof.* 1603.

Hear-

Hearing of it; for as the Receiver of ſtolen Goods is Partner with the Thief, ſo the willing Hearer and Entertainer of a falſe Report is Partner with the Slanderer: For, as according to the common Proverb, *If there were no Receivers, there would be no Thieves*; ſo if there were none to give ear to and cheriſh Slanders, there would be none to invent or diſperſe them: If there were none to give too eaſie Credit to them, there would be none would think it worth their while to ſpend their Time in reporting them to no Purpoſe. So that whoſoever, by a willing Audience and Attention, by a credulous Approbation and Aſſent, or by expreſſing a Delight and Pleaſure therein, doth any ways further or abet this wicked Practice; as he is a Partner in the Fact, ſo he is a Sharer in the Guilt, and reſponſible likewiſe for the Miſchief that may enſue, which God knows very often is very great.

VII. It is related of St. *Auguſtine*, (*a*) That he had upon his Table written, in Two *Latin* Verſes, Words to this Effect; He that delighteth to ſlander thoſe that are abſent, let him know, that he is unworthy to ſit at this Table, or that this Table is unfit for him. And if he heard any of his Gueſts, or any there preſent, to run out againſt another, he would preſently put them in mind of the forementioned Words, and threaten, if they would not leave off, to leave the Company, and retire to his Chamber. And truly, whoſoever doth ſeriouſly conſider thoſe Words of *Solomon*, Prov. xvii. 4. *He is a Wicked-doer, who giveth heed to falſe Lips; and a Lyar, that giveth ear to a naughty Tongue*, muſt needs ſhew a great Indignation againſt this Vice, an utter Averſion from hearing ſlanderous Reports, and a conſtant Unwillingneſs to believe them. It is part of the good Man's Character, *Pſal.* xv. 3. That he *takes not up* [or, as it is render'd in the Margin, *doth not receive* or *endure*] *a Reproach againſt his Neighbour*; and part of the wiſe Man's Character too: For we are told, *Prov.* xiv. 15. That he is a ſimple Man that believeth every Word. He that is truly good, and wiſe, conſiders how void of Equity and Conſideration the buſie and talking Part of Mankind is: He knows how often ſuch falſe Reports are raiſed from nothing at all, and how nimbly they ſcatter and

(*a*) *Poſidori, c.* 22. *Eraſm. de Lingua, p.* 209.

diſperſe

diſperſe themſelves; how eaſily from one Thing they are transformed into another, and how ſoon from ſmall Sparks they grow into a great Blaze: And therefore, as he would not be willing that others ſhould, upon the like weak Grounds, raſhly believe any ill Report concerning himſelf; ſo he cannot be ſo maliciouſly diſpoſed, as, upon every idle Hear-ſay, to entertain a bad Opinion of another.

VIII. The doing of which, as it ſhews want of Charity, ſo likewiſe want of Judgment too: For the Slanderer is a common Enemy; and therefore, as what he tells you is not out of any Good-will to you, but Ill-will to another, ſo no doubt he will be as ready to ſerve you in the ſame kind. And therefore the Prophet's Advice is very ſeaſonable at all times, *Jer.* ix. 4, 5. *Take ye heed every one of his Neighbour, and truſt ye not in any Brother; for every Brother will utterly ſupplant, and every Neighbour will walk with Slanders. And they will deceive every one his Neighbour, and will not ſpeak the Truth: They have taught their Tongue to ſpeak Lyes, and weary themſelves to commit Iniquity.* *Ageſilaus (a)* therefore (King of the *Lacedæmonians)* was wont to ſay, That the Manners and Temper of the Slanderer are no leſs to be weighed and conſidered than thoſe of the Perſon whom he defames; *viz.* Whether or no he be not his particular Enemy himſelf, or be encouraged, bribed, or ſet on by ſome who are diſaffected to him, and bear him a Grudge? Whether he be not too credulous, and apt to be impoſed upon; or vain, and careleſs of what he ſays? Whether or no he be known to be juſt and honeſt in his Dealings, and one that in his Diſcourſe hath been obſerved to have had always a due Regard to Equity and Truth? Whether he be not ill-humour'd, or proud, and have been wont to make it his common Practice to report bad Stories of others? *&c.* For, as *Cicero* obſerves, *(b) He that is ready to ſpeak evil of another, ought to be free from Faults himſelf; from thoſe at leaſt wherewith he reproacheth his Neighbour:* (c) For ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* ii. 1. *Thou art inexcuſable, O Man, whoſoever thou art, that judgeſt*

(a) *Eraſm. de Ling. p.* 223. (b) *Cic. in Salluſt. & Act.* 5. *in Verr.* (c) *Quæ culpare ſoles, ea tu ne feceris ipſe.* Cato de Mor. l. 1. ſect. 30.

thus;

thus; for whilſt thou that judgeſt, doſt the ſame Things wherein thou judgeſt another, thou condemneſt thy ſelf; and not only ſo, but, for the ſame Reaſon that he finds fault with others, he muſt expect that others will condemn him.

IX. *Beware of uttering Slanders,* was one of thoſe excellent Rules *Iſocrates* (*a*) preſcribed to his *Demonicus*; and I hope, from what hath been ſaid, it appears how ſinful and unbecoming it is, either to publiſh falſe Reports, or to hear them: Which ſort of Practices, as they muſt needs be very odious in the Sight of God, who loveth the Peace and Welfare of Men; ſo common Senſe and daily Experience do ſhew how baſe and diſingenuous they are in themſelves, how contrary they are to Juſtice, how oppoſite to Charity, how odious to good Men, and how hurtful to all; neither are the miſchievous Conſequences of them ſoon over. Whence ſome have compared Calumny to *London* Dirt, with which tho' a Man may be beſpatter'd in an Inſtant, yet it requires much Time and Pains to ſcour it out again; and however the Wound may be healed up, yet the Scar will ſtill remain. If this Practice were as commendable as it is common, God Almighty would not by the Mouth of his Apoſtle have commanded us, 1 *Pet.* ii. 1. *to lay aſide all Malice, and all Guile, and Hypocriſies, and Envies, and Evil-ſpeakings.* And well are theſe joined together, ſince Slander hath all along been a principal Engine whereby covetous and ambitious, envious and ill-natur'd Perſons have endeavoured, by undermining others, to advance themſelves: But let the Deſign in doing ſo be what it will, *Solomon*'s Words will eternally hold true, *Prov.* x. 18. *He that uttereth a Slander is a Fool.* A Fool he is, becauſe he is guilty of a very great Sin, (for all Sin is fooliſh) and alſo becauſe he brings many great Inconveniencies, Troubles, and Miſchiefs on himſelf: For by no Means can a Man raiſe ſo deadly Enmity againſt himſelf, and by Conſequence ſo endanger his Eaſe, Welfare, and Safety, as by this vile Practice; ſeeing hereby he becomes not only odious to the Perſon whom he doth abuſe, but to all others too, who are always upon ſhunning and avoiding him as a dangerous Perſon; becauſe

(*a*) Εὐλαβοῦ τὰς διαβολάς. Iſocrat. ad Demonicum.

they

they are ſenſible how eaſily, and they know not how ſoon, it may be their own *(a)* Caſe, as to have him ſhoot out, even againſt them too, ſuch Arrows, againſt which there is no Guard or Defence, *even bitter Words*, Pſal. lxiv. 3.

X. But, to be ſure, as the Righteous Man is ſaid to hate Lying, ſo all ſuch honeſt Perſons as have any Love of Truth and Ingenuity, any Regard to Juſtice and Charity, or any Senſe of Humanity and common Civility, can never be ſuppoſed to lend an ear to the Slanderer with any Patience, Delight, or Satisfaction: So that he is baniſhed from all Company and Converſation, or becomes very unwelcome whenſoever he thruſts himſelf into it; none thinking it ſafe to truſt or keep Company with thoſe who will make no Scruple of ſaying any Thing that will pleaſe their Fancies, promote their Intereſt, or ſatisfie their Revenge. Neither is this all: For the Conſcience of dealing ſo baſely and unworthily by another, doth continually rack and torment the Slanderer; he is perpetually haunted with Diſquiet and Regret; and being always in Danger, he is therefore always in Fear of being found out, and compell'd with Shame to recant and ſay backward, if not ſome other Way to render Satisfaction; whilſt no Body ſeems in the leaſt to concern themſelves to excuſe his Faults, who doth ſo outragiouſly endeavour to take away the Reputation of others.

XI. Some have thought that Defamation ought to be more ſeverely puniſhed than Theft, becauſe it doth more Injury to civil Societies; and becauſe it is a harder Matter to ſecure one's Reputation from a Slanderer, than one's Money from a Robber. And indeed, if what *Solomon* ſays be obſervable, *Prov.* xxii. 1. That *a good Name is rather to be choſen than great Riches*; and if by *Name* there we are to underſtand (as it is plain we muſt) a Man's Credit, Fame, and Reputation in the World; the Inference is clear, That a Defamer is the worſt of Thieves, the Sacrilegious ones excepted. *(b)* Perhaps, becauſe he draws no Blood, nor breaks any Bones, he may fanſie himſelf innocent, and ſuppoſe no great Wrong or Injury to be

(a) Nam tua res agitur, paries quum proximus ardet. Horat. l. 1. epiſt. 18. *(b) Godolph. Repert. Canonic. Introduct. p.* 62, 63. *ed.* 3. *Lond.* 1687.

done

done his Neighbour. But herein he is mightily miſtaken: For ſince all Perſons (ſuch eſpecially as have any true Notion of Honeſty, or Honour) do ſet a higher Value upon their good Name, than upon any of their Goods and Poſſeſſions, yea, than upon their very Lives: Therefore, by bereaving them of that, they do them greater Wrong, than if they had broke open their Houſes, robb'd them on the Highway, or cut their Throats. What is ſtolen may be recovered, and the Wounds of the Body may be cured; but the taking away of a Man's good Name is ſuch an Injury as is irreparable, and for which there is no Cure or Reſtitution; not to mention how often all that a Man hath in this World, all the Comforts and Conveniencies of this Life depend upon it: So that, being deprived of his good Name, he is robb'd of all; except a good Conſcience, which is beyond the Reach of Malice or Misfortune.

XII. To what hath been ſaid, I may likewiſe add, That Slander is the moſt black and helliſh Sin imaginable: For it is that which gives the Devil his very Names, as expreſſing his Nature the moſt of any; for therefore is he called the Slanderer, or malicious Accuſer, *John* viii. 44. therefore is he called Satan, *Acts* v. 3. *i. e.* the Adverſary, or ſpiteful Enemy; the Accuſer of the Brethren, *Rev.* xii. 10. and the Father of a Lye, *John* viii. 44. He is the grand Defamer of God to Man, of Man to God, and of one Man to another. Of God to Man; as when he told *Eve* ſhe ſhould not die, tho' ſhe did eat of the Forbidden Fruit, *Gen.* iii. 4. Which was as much as if he had ſaid, God doth but deceive you with ſuch Threats and Menaces; ye ſhall not die at all. Of Men to God; called therefore the Accuſer of the Brethren, *Rev.* xii. 10. and the Adverſary that *goeth about like a roaring Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. v. 8. And that thus he dealt with holy *Job*, God himſelf confeſſeth, *Job.* ii. 3. ſaying unto Satan, *Haſt thou conſidered my Servant Job; how he ſtill holdeth faſt his Integrity, although thou movedſt me againſt him, to deſtroy him without Cauſe?* And laſtly, of Man to Man; by ingendring ungodly and uncharitable Surmiſes, Opinions, and Suſpicions, in one Man againſt another; and in provoking and ſtirring up one Man to ſlander, hurt, and injure one another: For which Cauſe he is ſaid, *Eph.* ii. 2.

to

to work *in the Children of Diſobedience*; and their Wiſdom is ſaid to be deviliſh, who have *bitter Envying and Strife* in their Hearts, *Jam.* iii. 14, 15. Now certainly that Practice muſt needs be confeſs'd to be highly wicked, whereby Perſons become Nameſakes to the Devil himſelf, and do ſo exactly reſemble him in Nature and Diſpoſition; and therefore it is no Wonder (unleſs they prevent the ſame by a timely and ſerious Repentance) that it doth expoſe them to endleſs Miſeries and Sorrows, and baniſh them from Heaven and eternal Happineſs. *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* vi. 16, 17, 18, 19. there are Six Things which the Lord doth hate, and the Seventh he counts a foul Abomination. Pride and Bloodineſs, and wicked Imaginations, were hateful enough; but there is yet a worſe and more abominable Thing, *a falſe Witneſs that ſpeaketh Lyes*, and him *that ſoweth Diſcord among Brethren*, by creating and fomenting ſuch ill Opinions in one of another, whereby Charity is quenched, Unkindneſs foſter'd, and ſuch Animoſities and Quarrels raiſed, as do too too often end in Blood. Part of the Character *David* gives of one that ſhall dwell in God's holy Hill, is, that he *ſpeaketh the Truth from his Heart*, Pſal. xv. 3, 4. that he *backbiteth not with his Tongue, neither taketh up a Reproach againſt his Neighbour*. And we are aſſured, *Rev.* xxi. 27. that none that maketh a Lye ſhall enter into the heavenly City; that without thoſe Manſions of unconceivable Joy and Bliſs every one muſt eternally abide that loveth or maketh a Lye, *Rev.* xxii. 15. much more then from thence ſhall be excluded thoſe moſt injurious and miſchievous Lyars, who, without any Truth or Juſtice, ſlander and reproach their Brethren. So that I ſhall conclude this Head with the Words of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 12, 13, 14. *What Man is he that deſireth Life, and loveth many Days, that he may ſee Good? Keep thy Tongue from Evil, and thy Lips from ſpeaking Guile. Depart from Evil, and do good; ſeek Peace, and purſue it.*

SECT.

SECT. III.

Of Detraction, or Backbiting.

I. DEtraction, or Backbiting is another Scourge of the Tongue (*Job* v. 21.) that is to be condemned; between which and Slander, as there is much Affinity, ſo there is ſome Difference: For Slander involveth an Imputation of Falſhood, and proceeds more openly, and boldly; but Detraction may be couched in Truth, and doth endeavour more cloſely, (*a*) and privily to diſparage, or diſgrace another: A Vice, ſays *Cicero*, (*b*) when out of a naughty Diſpoſition, or Deſign, a Man ſtudiouſly ſtrives to leſſen, or impair his Neighbour's Reputation, by reporting in his Abſence, ſomething or other concerning him that is ridiculous, abuſive, or reproachful; ſeeking out for Blemiſhes, and Defects, even in the beſt Actions of the moſt worthy Perſons, and uſing all imaginable Care, and Cunning to pervert it, and miſrepreſent every thing to that Purpoſe. For you may eaſily obſerve, that the Backbiter, or Detractor doth always repreſent Things under the moſt diſadvantageous Circumſtances it is poſſible for him to do; concealing whatſoever may ſerve to excuſe, or commend them; he miſconſtrues the Words, miſinterprets the Deſigns, miſnames the Qualities, and miſrepreſents the Actions of his Neighbour: So that no Man can be ſafe from him, becauſe there is Nothing, but by theſe Means, may be corrupted, and depraved: (*c*) 'A Perſon that is 'Chearful and Familiar, is thus repreſented as one that is 'Vain and Looſe: The Liberal Man as a Prodigal, and 'Spendthrift: The Frugal and Provident Man, as Covetous and Sordid: The Sober and Modeſt, as Dull and 'Stupid: The Wary and Reſerved, as Crafty and Deſigning: The Religious and Godly, as Hypocritical and 'Superſtitious: The Juſt and Honeſt, as a Fool, and no 'good Contriver: The Compaſſionate and Pitiful, as

(*a*) *Delicti genus, quo abſentis fama clanculum læditur.* Aquin. 2a. 2æ. qu. 73. p. 137. col. 1. Paris, 1622. (*b*) Cic. Offic. l. 1. p. 57. Lond. 1629. (*c*) *Nihil eſt, quin malè narrando poſſit depravari.* Terent. in Phormione.

'Weak

'Weak and Childiſh: The Quiet and Peacable Man, as 'Cowardly and Sneaking: The Adventurous and Valiant, 'as Raſh and Ambitious: The Affable and Courteous, 'as Simple and Mean-ſpirited: And the Merry and Jocu-'lar, as Diſſolute and Prophane.

II. In a Word, Malice and Baſeneſs generally accompany Backbiting, and Detraction; and a deſire to diſparage or diſgrace another, can never ſpring from any good Root; *For out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh*, Mat. xii. 34. *An evil Man, out of the evil Treaſure of his Heart bringeth forth that which is Evil*, v. 35. And it is the Property of baſe Perſons to ſtrive to make others to be eſteemed as bad as themſelves: Sometimes Pride and Ambition, and a deſire to engroſs all Commendations to themſelves: Sometimes ill Nature, and a diſingenuous Diſpoſition put Perſons upon doing this; and oftentimes Envy, and an evil Eye doth the ſame.

III. Thus *Aquinas* tells us, (*a*) That Backbiting, and Detraction, ſpring from Envy at another's thriving in the World, or flouriſhing in the good Eſteem of Men, which therefore the Detractor ſtrives all he can to blaſt and ſtifle: For perceiving himſelf not to have the Worth, and deſpairing to arrive to the Credit, and Renown others have attain'd to, this repining Paſſion puts him upon diſparaging them, that ſo, when he ſees he cannot ariſe to their Pitch, he may bring them down to his. This envious kind of Pride will not permit him to endure that any, beſide himſelf, ſhould be either Excellent, Uſefull, or Good; and therefore he ſeeks all he can to eclipſe and darken the Gifts, good Qualities, and Perfections of others; and either wholly to take off that Eſteem which is due to them, or to leſſen it, at leaſt in the Opinion of the World, by undervaluing and ſpeaking ſlightly of them: Or if they appear ſo clear and bright, as he knows not which way to cloud, and obnubilate ſo radiant a Light, then by reporting ſome real, or feigned Infirmity of him, he endeavours to detract from his Neighbour's Excellencies; *and by caſting in ſome dead Flies*, as the wiſe Man ſpeaks, *Eccleſ.* x. 1. endeavours to corrupt the Savour of ſo delicious an Ointment.

(*a*) *Detractio oritur ex invidia.* Tho. Aquin. 2a. 2æ. qu. 73. art. 3. p. 138. col. 1. Paris 1622.

ment. The doing which, as it is very unreaſonable (for certainly we ought not to love, or eſteem any Man the leſs for having ſuch good Qualities for which we ought to value, and reſpect him the more) ſo likewiſe is it very unjuſt; and injurious alſo to God, who graciouſly beſtowed the ſame upon him, as is expreſly declar'd in the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, *Mat.* xx. 15. where the Lord thereof asks them who found fault with his Bounty to others, *Whether or no it was not lawful to do what he pleaſed with his own? and what Reaſon there was that any of them ſhould have an evil Eye, becauſe his was good?* We ought rather to acknowledge, reverence, and be thankful for ſuch eminent Gifts in our Brethren, 1 *Cor.* i. 4. and glorifie God in their behalf; than murmur, and repine at his Goodneſs; neither can there be a truer ſign of a baſe Diſpoſition, than to envy, hate, and wiſh a Man ill, for no other Reaſon, but becauſe God hath been good, and gracious unto him.

IV. Sometimes again, Spite, Malice, and Revenge, are the Cauſes of Backbiting and Detraction: Such a Perſon fanſies his Neighbour's Vertue, or Worth to be highly prejudicial to him, as rendring his Unworthineſs the more conſpicuous, and remarkable; and therefore out of a ſpiteful Revenge he labours to diſparage, and vilifie the ſame, always taking care, where he cannot find Spots, to make, and deviſe 'em; being ſenſible of nó good Qualities in himſelf, whereon to build a Reputation, he ſeeks to better himſelf by diſcrediting others, and ſo to ground a kind of Credit upon the Ruins, and Rubbiſh of another's Fame; which leads laſtly to another Principle from whence this evil Practice doth ſpring, and that is, a baſe ſelfiſh Deſign; for as Detraction, or Backbiting is a common Engine, whereby ill Perſons ſtrive to attain their Ends; ſo upon that Account do they never ſcruple by the ſame unlawful Means to undermine, and ſupplant whomſoever they find, or fanſie to ſtand in their way. How uſual is this in the Courts of great Princes, where there is nothing almoſt but Intriguing, and Treachery, and tripping up one anothers Heels to make way for their own Advancement? But let ſuch pretending Chriſtians hear the Words of that wiſe, and honeſt Heathen, (*a*) The detracting, or

(*a*) *Detrahere aliquid alteri*, &c. Cic. Offic. l. 3. p. 111. Lond. 1629.

taking away of any thing relating to another (whether in Reputation, or Poſſeſſions) and advantaging a Man's ſelf by another's Damage, or Loſs, is more contrary to Nature than Death, or Poverty, or Grief, or whatever elſe can happen to his Body, or Eſtate; for it utterly takes away, ſaith he, all manner of humane Society.

V. But, from whatſoever Cauſe it may ſpring, the impairing or leſſening another in point of Fame, rendring him leſs valued, and eſteemed by others, is the final Aim of Detraction, which all muſt grant to be a very bad one; becauſe a Man's Reputation is a Thing very valuable, as well as deſirable; ſaid therefore to be *better than precious Ointment*, Eccleſ. vii. 1. *And rather to be choſen than great Riches*, Prov. xxii. 1. *and to make the Bones fat*, Prov. xv. 30. and the like: And therefore to rob him of that, is the higheſt Injury that can be done him; it being eſteemed dearer to a Man than his very Life, or however, one of the greateſt Comforts of it: Yea, to ſome Perſons, (ſuch eſpecially as ſubſiſt by Dealings in the World) 'tis ſo very neceſſary, that it may well be reckon'd, as the chief Means of their Livelihood. And that which makes the Injury of deſtroying another's Credit the greater, is the difficulty, if not impoſſibility of making Reparation. A Man's good Name is like the Merchant's Wealth, got in many Years, and loſt in an Hour; and then, no Ruines are ſo irreparable as thoſe of it; becauſe in this cenſorious and uncharitable Age, daily Experience ſhews how hard a Matter it is, when Men are poſſeſs'd of an ill Opinion of any Perſon, to work it out; and that very few are as willing to lay down ill Conceits of their Neighbours, as they are to take them up: But notwithſtanding all this, the malicious Backbiter is bound in Reaſon, and Religion to endeavour all he can to reſtore the good Name of his Neighbour, which by his detracting Tongue he hath taken away, becauſe without his doing ſo, he can never expect God's Pardon for ſo abominable a Sin.

VI. To this End, let ſuch Perſons ſeriouſly conſider how patiently they would ſuffer their own Reputation to be thus invaded, who are ſo ready to take away that of their Neighbour; for it may be obſerved, that thoſe who moſt ſlight another's Fame, are commonly ſuch as are very tender of their own; and will not endure ſo much as that

it ſhould be touch'd: From whence it may eaſily appear how very unjuſt this Practice is, and how very uncharitable too, as contradicting that grand Rule of Charity, *the loving our Neighbour as our ſelves*, Mat. xix. 19. *and hoping and believing the beſt of him we can*, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. And indeed, there can ſcarce be a nobler Inſtance of Charity, than the concealing the Faults of others, ſo they be not flatter'd or perſwaded to continue them: But the Detractor on the other hand by defiling the Beſt, and diſplaying the Worſt in his Brother, maliciouſly endeavours to bereave him of his deareſt, and moſt precious Enjoyment: The doing which, as it is moſt unjuſt, and uncharitable, ſo likewiſe is it very baſe, and a certain ſign of a mean Spirit, and ill Breeding? For true Generoſity conſiſts in nothing more than a candid, and favourable regard to others; but it is the Property of a Coward to ſtab a Man behind his Back, and detract from the Worth of a Perſon, who is not preſent to clear himſelf.

VII. Yea further, this Sin of Detraction or Backbiting, involves a great deal of Impiety too, and muſt needs on ſeveral Accounts be moſt odious to Almighty God; not only as he is *the God of Truth*, Deut. xxxii. 4. and therefore *abhors Lying*, Prov. vi. 17. with which Backbiting is commonly interwoven; not only as he is *the God of Juſtice*, Pſal. xlv. 21. and therefore is againſt one Perſons injuring another, Jer. xxii. 3. not only as he is *the God of Love*, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. and therefore hates ſuch a malicious violation of Charity; but alſo becauſe God is hereby robb'd of his Glory, and the practice of Goodneſs greatly hindred and obſtructed. We read, *Mat.* ix. 8. that upon our Saviour's miraculouſly curing one that was ſick of the Palſie, *the multitude that ſaw it, glorified God, who had given ſuch power unto men*: (for as ſuch a one Chriſt then appeared unto them, though the Power working theſe things was confeſs'd to be Divine:) but the envious Detractor, inſtead of reverencing and glorifying God for beſtowing any excellent Gifts and Graces on his Brethren, endeavours all he can to leſſen and diſgrace him: thus wounding the Divine Goodneſs, through the ſide of his Neighbour, whom by theſe means he doth alſo diſcourage from the practice of Vertue, whilſt he perceives the beſt Men, and beſt Actions to be expoſed to the rude Aſſaults of

Obloquy and Detraction, and the moſt diſadvantageous Apprehenſions about them.

VIII. It was therefore a good Saying, *Never ſpeak ill of any Man*; if of a good Man, it is Impiety; if of a bad Man, rather give him your Prayers; and as by the wiſe Man, *He that condemneth the juſt, is*, ſaid to be, *an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. xvii. 15. ſo by the Prophet, a Woe is pronounced againſt thoſe that *take away the Righteouſneſs of the righteous from him*, Iſa. v. 23. which will appear to be but juſt, if we conſider the bad Conſequents, which the doing ſo produceth, both in regard to others, as well as the common Practiſers thereof. For the Detractor is ſaid to wound Three with one Arrow ſhot from his viperous Tongue, *viz.* The Perſon whom he backbites, the Perſon that gives ear to him, and himſelf: To the firſt he certainly does a great deal of miſchief, by bereaving him of his Reputation, whereby oftentimes Diſappointments, and great Damage do accrue unto him: To the ſecond alſo he does the like, whilſt by inſtilling his poyſonous Suggeſtions into his Ears, he makes him take up unjuſt, and uncharitable Conceits of his Neighbour, and brings him in to be an Acceſſory in the wrong that is done him: And laſtly, to himſelf the Backbiter doth a great deal of Hurt and Prejudice, by raiſing up a great many Enemies; for every Man will be apt to ſay, He that thus abuſeth one, will be ready to do ſo to another, and to ſerve me after the ſame manner too, if I happen to come in his way: And therefore he is look'd upon as a baſe and dangerous Perſon to converſe with, and ſhun'd and abhor'd by all as a common Enemy to Mankind: All are ready to return him the ſame Meaſure, as that wherewith he meets unto others, *Matt.* vii. 2. and commonly whilſt he ſeeks to bring Trouble or Shame upon his Neighbours, he brings it upon himſelf: For as true Worth, however it may chance to be clouded for a time, will at length break forth through the blackeſt Miſts, and gloriouſly diſplay it ſelf to the Confuſion of the moſt inveterate Oppoſers thereof: So will the folly and malice of Detraction appear at laſt very viſible unto all Men.

IX. Now if what hath been ſaid be ſeriouſly conſider'd, it will ſeem no wonder at all, that *Whiſperings*, and *Backbitings* are join'd with *Debates*, *Envyings*, *Wrath*, *Swellings*,

Swellings, Tumults, 2 Cor. xii. 20. and that ſuch common Barretters and Backbiters are rank'd amongſt thoſe that are filled *with all Unrighteouſneſs, Wickedneſs, Envy, and Maliciouſneſs*; amongſt *Murtherers, haters of God, Covenant-breakers, and inventers of evil things*; among ſuch as are *deſpiteful, proud, unmerciful,* &c. Rom. i. 29, 30, 31. as if no Sins were greater than thoſe we have been condemning, none more injurious; whence *Diogenes* (*a*) being demanded the Bitings of what Beaſts were moſt dangerous? returned this Anſwer, *Of tame Beaſts, a Flatterer; of wild, a Detractor*; and accordingly the royal Pſalmiſt, complaining of his Misfortune in falling into ſuch hands, ſaith, *Pſal.* lvii. 4. *My ſoul is among Lions, and I lie even among them that are ſet on fire, even the ſons of men, whoſe teeth are ſpears and arrows, and their tongue a ſharp ſword; they did tear me,* ſaith he, *and ceaſed not,* Pſal. xxxv. 15, 16. *and gnaſhed upon me with their teeth; their words were as drawn ſwords,* Pſal. lv. 21. *and ſwords were in their lips,* Pſal. lix. 7. ſo likewiſe *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xii. 18. that *there is that ſpeaketh like the piercings of a ſword*; and who that is, you may gueſs from what he adds, *Prov.* xxv. 18. ſaying, *A man that beareth falſe witneſs againſt his neighbour, is a maul, and a ſword, and a ſharp arrow*; againſt which Swords and Arrows there is no Protection.

X. It muſt therefore be confeſt, that the Son of *Sirach*'s Obſervations are very proper and true, *Eccleſ.* xix. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. *He that can rule his tongue ſhall live without ſtrife, and he that hateth babling, ſhall have leſs evil: Rehearſe not unto another that which is told unto thee, and thou ſhalt fare never the worſe. Whether it be to friend or foe, talk not of other mens lives, and if thou canſt without offence, reveal them not. For he hath heard and obſerved thee, and when time cometh he will hate thee. If thou haſt heard a word, let it die with thee, and be bold it will not burſt thee:* For he is *a fool* that *travelleth with a word, as a woman in labour of a child; and as an arrow that ſticketh in a mans thigh, ſo is a word in a fools belly.* Of this *Alexander the Great* was not inſenſible, who having received a Letter

(*a*) Stanley's *Hiſtory of Philoſophy,* Part VII. p. 413. Ed. 2. Lond. 1687.

from his Mother, wherein (*a*) ſhe laid ſome ill things to *Antipater*'s Charge, after he had read it over, with his great Favourite *Hephæſtion*, he preſently took his Signet from his Finger, and put it upon *Hephæſtion*'s Lips, thereby ſealing them up as it were, and conjuring a ſtrict Silence of another's Diſgrace. *Deride not the Abſent*, was the Precept of an Eminent Philoſopher; *And ſpeak not evil one of another*, of as Eminent an Apoſtle, *Jam.* iv. 11. *And ſpeak not evil of, or curſe not the deaf*, is the Command of Almighty God, *Lev.* xix. 14. where by the Deaf is generally underſtood, one that is abſent, and cannot hear what is ſaid, and therefore cannot defend himſelf: And as *Horace* (*b*) adviſeth every one to beware what, and to whom they ſpeak, ſo the wiſe Man bids us, *Beware of murmurings, which is unprofitable, and refrain our tongues from backbiting*; *Becauſe*, as he adds, *there is no word ſo ſecret, that ſhall go for nought, and the mouth that belyeth, ſlayeth the ſoul.*

XI. And here it muſt be obſerved, That, as *Aquinas* (*c*) affirms, not only the Authors and Favourers of Backbiting and Detraction, but alſo all ſuch as do not ſuppreſs, or reſtrain it, when they can, are to be blamed: And that whoſoever doth pleaſingly lend an (*d*) Ear to the Detractor, is as guilty as he; and truly to good Men nothing can be more irkſome, than to hear one Perſon backbite another. They know that Charity obliges them to think the beſt, and leave what they know not to the ſearcher of hearts: And becauſe, according to that common Saying,

In part he's guilty of the Wrong that's done,
Who doth believe thoſe falſe Reports that run.

They therefore neither believe all they hear, nor ſpeak all they believe, they judge charitably of all, and hope well of the worſt. The Poets ſhewing what Perſons are moſt carefully to be avoided, (*e*) mentions ſuch as we have been condemning: Such as abuſe their Friends behind

(*a*) Plutarch. *Apophthegm. inter oper. moral.* p. 333. Francof. 1603. (*b*) *Quid de quoque viro, & cui dicas ſæpe caveto.* Hor. (*c*) Aquin. 2ª. 2æ. qu. 73. p. 137. col. 2. Paris, 1622. (*d*) Aquin. *ib.* art. 4. p. 138. col. 2. (*e*) Horat. l. 1. Serm. Sat. iv. p. 175. Lond. 1637.

their

their Backs, or (which he makes all one) ſuch as do not take their Parts, when others do backbite and defame them; ſuch as laugh, and are pleaſed to hear others diſparaged; ſuch as can ſay things they never ſaw done: and ſuch as cannot forbear revealing what Secrets are committed to them: But now, ſince St. *Jerome* hath proclaimed him happy, who hath ſo fortified himſelf againſt this Vice, (*a*) That none dare backbite another in his Preſence; if it be ask'd, How a Man may arrive to this Happineſs? I anſwer, by manifeſting a diſlike and deteſtation of ſuch an evil Practice. This was the Method that holy Father himſelf preſcribed, ſaying, '(*b*) As an Arrow ſhot againſt 'any thing that is hard and impenetrable, ſometimes re-'bounds on him that ſhot it, ſo a Detractor, when he per-'ceives any one not to be pleaſed with his Stories, but to 'ſtop his Ears againſt them, preſently leaves off, and be-'comes mute. *The north wind*, ſaith *Solomon*, *driveth away Rain, ſo doth an angry Countenance a backbiting Tongue*, Prov. xxv. 23. And it is reported of Sir *Thomas More*, (*c*) ſometime Lord High-Chancellor of *England*, That when he heard any at his Table ſpeaking Detraction, he would interrupt them thus, *Let any Man think as he pleaſeth, I like this Room very well, for it is well contrived, and fairly built.*

XII. In ſhort, we ought to take heed that we neither have itching Tongues, nor itching Ears; *i. e.* That we neither backbite others our ſelves, nor liſten to thoſe who do: And to that end, we are to ſuppreſs all Curioſity and Inquiſitiveneſs concerning others, which is the proper Nouriſhment of Detraction; an unneceſſary and unprofitable prying into things that do not concern us: A Vice ſo common to Mankind, that they ſeem naturally inclin'd to mind the Lives and Actions of others, more than their own: But then, if it be conſidered, That this Inquiſitiveneſs is generally attended with Malevolence and Ill-will; and few ſuch Buſie-bodies are to be found but what are great Babblers, it muſt needs be prudent and ſafe to avoid both the one and the other; to have a care of indulging ſuch a curious Humour, or following the Example of thoſe who

(*a*) *Hieron. ad Celantiam.* (*b*) *Hieron. Epiſt. ad Ruſt.* (*c*) *Hiſtory of Sir* Thomas More, Lond. 1652. p. 145.

are continually creating to themſelves unneceſſary Troubles by medling, either with Matters or Perſons, which are no part at all of their Concerns: For as the Pious Author of *The Imitation of Chriſt*, ſpeaks, ‘ (*a*) What have ‘ you to do with the Vertues or Vices, the Conduct, or ‘ the Indiſcretions of others? How they behave themſelves, what Company they keep, or with what Diſcourſe they entertain one another? Why all this eager ‘ and intemperate Zeal to vindicate, or accuſe them? ‘ You ſhall not anſwer for their Miſcarriages, nor be one ‘ whit the better for their Excellencies; your own Words ‘ and Actions are the only things you will be called to ‘ account for: Look well to them, and beware, leſt this ‘ buſie and malicious Impertinence do not inflame that ‘ Reckoning; trouble not your ſelf to turn Informer, and ‘ take not upon you to be a Judge, leave that to God, ‘ who knows every Man throughly, and whoſe Obſervation, not any thing that is done under the Sun, can eſcape; who exactly underſtands each Perſons Condition, ‘ ſees every Action, nay every Intention and Deſign, and ‘ not only what they do, but what they aim, and drive at ‘ alſo: Study therefore, *ſaith he*, rather to be quiet, and ‘ contain your ſelf within your own Buſineſs; and let the ‘ prying, cenſorious, vain, and intriguing World follow ‘ their own Devices, for all which they ſhall one Day be ‘ aſſuredly ſummon'd to a ſevere account.

XIII. 'Tis the Duty of Chriſtians (and of all Perſons indeed) to love one another with eſpecial Tenderneſs of Affection, and to delight in one anothers good; to tender the Intereſt and Reputation of each other as their own; and to rejoice in their Proſperity and Welfare: *Wherefore putting away Lying*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *ſpeak every Man Truth with his Neighbour, for we are Members one of another*; in a word, All Perſons ought to take care that they believe not whatſoever is told them, and report not again whatſoever they hear; for if they do, they will not long enjoy any true Friends, neither will they ever want great Troubles, or ever dwell in that *holy Hill*, Pſal. xv. 1. thoſe *amicable Tabernacles*, Pſal. lxxxiv. 1. thoſe *everlaſting Habitations*, Luke xvi. 9. From whence, *he that backbiteth*

(*a*) *Thom. à Kempis.* l. 3. c. 28. p. 187. *Lond.* 1700. Ed. 2.

with

with his Tongue, and doth Evil to his Neighbour, or taketh up a reproach againſt his Neighbour, ſhall be for ever baniſh'd, *Pſal.* xv. 3.

XIV. To this Head may be reduced Two other Faults condemn'd in Holy Writ, *viz. Tale-bearing* and *Whiſpering*: The Firſt of theſe is a malicious ſpreading of Tales, prejudicial to the Fame or Welfare of another, by bringing him into Hatred, Diſgrace, or Contempt; either to revenge themſelves, or get ſomething which otherwiſe they could not obtain; relying (as to the Truth of what they ſay) upon any ſlight or ſlender Authority, and thinking it lawful to report whatſoever they hear, if they can but quote an Author for it: For it is not our Invention, *ſay they*, we only tell you what we heard, which if it be falſe, the Blame lies at the doors of thoſe who informed us, not ours. But, alas! they are greatly miſtaken, if they think this will excuſe their being acceſſory to the propagating, and ſpreading abroad ſuch Reports concerning their Neighbour, as may any wiſe injure, or diſgrace him; whatſoever ſpecious Pretences, and plauſible Excuſes may be made uſe of: As that they are heartily ſorry their Neighbour hath done ſuch, or ſuch a Thing, which they publiſh, God knows, not out of any Malice, or ill Will, but a good Deſign, which is plain, becauſe that, if they had a Mind, they could tell more than they do; but however, they deſire and charge the Party, to whom they tell their Stories, to keep them ſecret, and not to ſay a Word to any Body.

XV. By theſe Means doth the Tale-bearer think to *transform himſelf into an Angel of Light*, 2 Cor. xi. 14. and under a Pretence of Zeal for God's Glory, hurts his Neighbour: But certainly if this Practice were ſo pleaſing in God's ſight, he would never have commanded his choſen People the *Jews*, Lev. xix. 16. *Not to go up and down as Tale-bearers among the People*, i. e. as Merchants, Huckſters, or Traders in ill Reports, and falſe Stories concerning their Neighbours, whereby they may be any ways prejudiced, or defamed, or an ill Opinion of them bred in the Minds of another. So likewiſe we are told, *Prov.* xviii. 8. *That the Words of a Tale-bearer are as Wounds, and go down into the innermoſt parts of the Belly*: Neither is it any Commendation to ſuch a Perſon, that inſtead

inſtead of making Peace, and promoting Union, and Concord, he is generally eſteemed (and not unjuſtly) a Fomenter of Strife, and Animoſity; for ſo ſaith the ſame wiſe Prince, *Prov.* xxvi. 20. *Where no Wood is, there the Fire goeth out, ſo where there is no Tale-bearer, the Strife ceaſeth.* When our Bleſſed Saviour ask'd his Diſciples, *Mat.* xvi. 13. What People ſaid of him, and who they ſuppoſed him to be? Whether an ordinary Man, or the promiſed Meſſias? (which Queſtion he asked, not as if he knew not what Men ſaid of him, nor out of an ambitious deſire of hearing himſelf commended, but to try their Faith) they did not tell him that one called him a *Demoniack*, John viii. 48. another a Wine-bibber and Glutton, *Mat.* xi. 19. or the like: but that ſome ſaid he was *John the Baptiſt*, Mat. xvi. 14. ſome *Elias*, and others *Jeremias, or one of the Prophets*: They concealed the worſt, and reported the beſt, contrary to the common, and current Practice of the Tale-bearers of our Age; of whom all Parts are ſo full, that there is ſcarce a Place to which the Prophets Words may not very properly be applied, *Ezek.* xxii. 9. *In thee are Men that carry Tales, to ſhed Blood, or do Miſchief*: Though 'tis wonderfull to ſee how Perſons, who ſeem otherwiſe very godly and religious, are overtaken with this Vice, notwithſtanding they know very well, St. *James* exhorts every Man *to be ſwift to hear, but ſlow to ſpeak*; and St. *Peter* utterly condemns *all buſy Bodies in other Mens Matters*, 1 *Pet.* iv. 15. For the better ſuppreſſing of whom there cannot be a better way, than not giving Ear to them; after the Example of *Plato*, (a) who being told that *Xenocrates*, (one of his Scholars) had ſpoke many unjuſt Things againſt him, he preſently rejected the Accuſation; the Informer perſiſting asked, Why he would not believe him? he replied, "Becauſe it was not probable, that he whom "he loved ſo much, ſhould not love him again": But then the Tale-bearer ſwearing it was true, *Plato* being unwilling to argue him of Perjury, affirmed, "That *Xeno-* "*crates* would never have ſaid ſo, but that there was ſome "Reaſon perhaps for it.

(a) Stanley's *Hiſt. of Philoſophy*: P. V. p. 172. Lond. 1687.

XVI. The

XVI. The other thing condemn'd is Whiſpering, *I fear*, ſaith St. *Paul*, writing to the *Corinthians*, *leſt when I come I ſhall not find you ſuch as I would, and leſt there be Debates, Envyings, Wrath, Strifes, Backbitings, Whiſperings*, &c. 2 Cor. xii. 20. This is a more cloſe and private way of ſpreading ſuch Reports, and like a ſecret Poiſon works incurable Effects, before ever a Perſon diſcerns it: And to ſhew the Hainouſneſs thereof, the ſame Apoſtle mentions it among thoſe great Crimes, which are the Effects of a reprobate Mind, *Rom.* i. 29. and ranks Whiſperers amongſt Sinners of the moſt odious Character: No wonder therefore that *Thales* was for having all ſuch Perſons turn'd out of Doors; for the doing which, were there no other Reaſon, yet that mentioned by *Solomon* is ſufficient, *Prov.* xvi. 28. *A froward Man ſoweth Strife, and a Whiſperer ſeparateth chief Friends*: And herein, as *Aquinas* (*a*) makes Whiſpering to differ from Backbiting, this aiming at leſſening another's Fame, but the other at ſetting Friends at Variance; ſo will he have Whiſpering to be ſo much a greater Sin than Detraction, (*b*) by how much Friendſhip is more valuable than Honour or Reputation. *Curſe therefore the Whiſperer, and Double-tongued*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *Ecclus.* xxviii. 13. *for ſuch have deſtroyed many that were at Peace.* So that I cannot conclude this Head better than with the ſame Perſon's Advice, *Ecclus.* v. 14. *Be not called a Whiſperer, and lie not in wait with thy Tongue: For a foul Shame is upon the Thief, and an evil Condemnation upon the Double-tongue. A Whiſperer defileth his own Soul, and is hated whereſoever he goeth*, Ecclus. xxi. 28.

XVII. Now the moſt ſuch Perſons have to ſay for themſelves, is, That they ſay no more than that which is true. But I would have them know, there are ſome Truths which Charity permits not any one to divulge, unleſs (as it may indeed ſometimes happen) ſome higher Obligation do intervene, and ſuperſede that we owe to our Neighbour's Fame: Otherwiſe we are to ſpeak well always of all Men, if it may be done with Truth; and when it cannot, then to be ſilent. For as it is unlawful at any time to report

(*a*) *Tho. Aquin.* 2a. 2æ. *qu.* 74. *p.* 139. *col.* 1. *Paris*, 1622.
(*b*) *Aquin. ibid. col.* 2.

that

that which is falſe, ſo likewiſe ſometimes to reveal a Secret, tho' it be true, if our Neighbour's Credit be thereby leſſen'd in the Opinion of any to whom his Offence was not known before; it being on all Hands agreed, that a Man may ſlander his Neighbour, even in ſpeaking the Truth unſeaſonably, or without Diſcretion, or not in due Time and Place: The doing which, ſometimes proceeds from Pride, which puts Men upon declaring all the Faults of others, that ſo their own Excellencies may appear the brighter; and ſometimes it proceeds from Envy, when, perceiving others to be more eſteem'd than themſelves, they endeavour to make them as hateful and contemptible to all Mankind as poſſible, by not only blazing abroad their Miſcarriages, but likewiſe by aggravating the ſame upon any ſlight Preſumptions and Conjectures, with their own additional Remarks and bitter Animadverſions. But, alas! if ſuch Perſons would look into their own Breaſts, they would find ſo much Work for their Inquiſitions and Cenſure at home, that they would not have any Leiſure to ramble abroad for it; neither would they have ſo much mind to it, did they but ſeriouſly conſider, that whoſoever doth thus publiſh an unknown concealed Fault or Miſdemeanour, is accountable for all the pernicious Conſequences of ſo doing: Such Reports, like Snow-balls, ſtill gathering the farther they run; and many Perſons having therefore for a long Time lain under heavy Scandals, that took their firſt Riſe from ſome little Inadvertency or other.

XVIII. Common Eſtimation is well known to put no good Character upon pragmatical, meddling People; and we generally think a Tattler and Buſie-body a Title of no ſmall Reproach, for the ſame Reaſon perhaps that St. *Paul* condemns them, 1 *Tim.* v. 13. Becauſe they wander about *from Houſe to Houſe, ſpeaking Things which they ought not*: The doing which, how well ſoever ſome ill Perſons may approve of, yet all ſuch as are good and honeſt muſt certainly diſlike. *Cicero* (*a*) ſays, That oftentimes thoſe who publiſh and proclaim others Crimes, do more offend and grate their Auditors Ears, than the Commiſſion of them doth their Minds. And indeed, all Perſons, of any Inge-

(*a*) *Sæpè gravius offendunt animos auditorum, qui aliena flagitia aperte dicunt, quàm qui committunt.* Cic. in Salluſt.

nuity

nuity or Prudence, will rather be for burying their Neighbour's Offences, than proclaiming them from the Houſe-tops; as eaſily perceiving how careful and ſollicitous every Man is to hide and conceal his own Guilt, and, in order thereunto, hath at all times ready a great Number of falſe Dreſſes and Diſguiſes, and counterfeit Excuſes; and conſequently they cannot but eſteem it groſs Partiality, and barbarous Inhumanity, to be ſo ready in the mean time to lay open and diſcover the leaſt Slip and Imperfection of another, but great Imprudence too: For ſince none are without ſome Fault or other, thoſe who are ſo ready to ſhoot ſuch Arrows, muſt expect they will ſometimes rebound with redoubled Force; and that *they ſhall have Judgment without Mercy* themſelves, who have *ſhewed no Mercy* towards others, *Jam.* ii. 13.

XIX. But if Perſons muſt needs be talking of their Neighbours Vices, let it be to admoniſh and reprove them. *Admoniſh a Friend*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *it may be he hath not done it; and if he have done it, that he do it no more. Admoniſh thy Friend, it may be he hath not ſaid it; and if he have, that he ſpeak it not again. Admoniſh a Friend, for many times it is a Slander; and believe not every Tale*, Eccluſ. xix. 13, 14, 15. The doing which, how good a Thing it is appears from the Words of *Solomon*, Prov. xxvii. 9. *Ointment and Perfume rejoice the Heart, ſo doth the Sweetneſs of a Man's Friend by hearty Counſel. As an Ear-ring of Gold, and an Ornament of fine Gold; ſo is a wiſe Reprover upon an obedient Ear*, Prov. xxv. 12. From which Words we may in ſome meaſure gather what thoſe Conditions are, which are requiſite to qualifie ſuch an Admonition or Correption aright: For, in the firſt place, there muſt be more than a bare Suſpicion; there muſt be a certain Knowledge of our Brother's Sin, and that the Matter of it be of ſome Weight too; after which, if we ſee no fitter Perſon perform this neceſſary Duty, nor can expect a better Opportunity, we are then, with all imaginable Mildneſs and Meekneſs, privately to admoniſh him, if we have any probable Ground of Hope that he will be reformed and made better, rather than inflamed and provoked to grow worſe by our Reproof.

XX. In doing this therefore, there muſt not be ſhewn the leaſt Sign of Choler, nor any Symptoms of Anger or Contempt;

tempt; no opprobrious Language, nor haughty and disdainful Looks. *What will you?* saith St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians, Shall I come unto you with a Rod, or in Love, and in the Spirit of Meekneſs?* 1 Cor. iv. 21. The Rod of Reproof ſhould, like that of *Jonathan*, 1 *Sam.* xiv. 27. be dipped in Honey: And as we are wont gently to awake ſuch as are aſleep, leſt, by rouzing them too violently and fiercely, we fright them into Fits or Frenzy; ſo muſt we likewiſe deal with thoſe who are oppreſs'd and ſeized with the Lethargy of Sin, leſt, by the offenſive Harſhneſs of a bitter Reproof, the wounded and broken Hearts be drove into Deſpair; or the prophane ones into Fury, and ſo become more hardned than they were before. For (*a*) he that admoniſheth another roughly, is more likely to exaſperate than to amend him; and too bitter Reproof is apt to make the Sinner ſhameleſs and obdurate, Nature being more apt to be led than drove; the moſt likely Weapon for one Man to conquer another, being Gentleneſs or Mildneſs. So that they muſt needs work by a wrong Engine, who in this Reſpect ſeek to gain their Ends by Roughneſs and Rigour; as Sores and Wounds are rather to be gently ſtroked and handled, than rudely and harſhly cruſh'd: And that Phyſician will in all Probability be more acceptable to his Patient, who calmly and favourably miniſters to his Patient's Diſeaſe, than one that furiouſly ſets upon him with terrifying Threats and ſurly Looks.

XXI. The Advice St. *Paul* gives in this Caſe is this, *If any Man be overtaken in a Fault, reſtore ſuch a one in the Spirit of Meekneſs*, Gal. vi. 1. that is, Exerciſe not too great Severity upon him, but moderate and temperate your Reprehenſion with Chriſtian Charity and Meekneſs. The *Greek* Word (*b*) properly ſignifies the putting any diſlocated Member of the Body in Joint, or into its right Place again; whereby is intimated, That when any one doth admoniſh his Brother of any Fault, for his Amendment, he muſt do it with the like Care and Moderation that Chirurgeons or Bone-ſetters uſe, who, being to ſet any Member that is out of joint, give the Patient all the good Words they can;

(*a*) *Qui ſine lenitate erudit, exaſperare potius, quam corrigere novit.* Iſidor, de ſum. bon. c. 8. (*b*) Καταρτίζετε.

and

and tho' they know it cannot be done without Pain, yet they endeavour to mitigate it all they may: Neither do the ſame Perſons always uſe Section and Cauſticks; they do not always cut, and launce, and burn, but chooſe rather, if it may do ſo well, to uſe mollifying Ointments, and mundifying Waters, to cleanſe and ſupple the Wound, and heal the Sore. So Sweetneſs of Compellation (as Biſhop *Hall* hath obſerved) is a great Help towards the good Entertainment of an Admonition: (*a*) *Roughneſs and Rigour many times harden thoſe Hearts which Meekneſs would have melted to Repentance*; *for* (ſays he) *whether we ſue, or convince, or reprove, little Good is got by Bitterneſs.* The Apoſtle, even where he commands the *Theſſalonians* to avoid the Company of evil Perſons, 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 15. exhorts them nevertheleſs not to count them as Enemies, but admoniſh them as Brethren. But, alas! in our Days we have as much Reaſon to complain as *Eraſmus* did in his, That it is the common Practice to attack thoſe Vices of others with Railing and Reproach, that ought to be healed by mild and fraternal Admonition. It was *Cicero*'s (*b*) Obſervation, That all harſh Speeches are in this Caſe to be avoided: *All Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking*, to uſe the Words of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* iv. 31. All ſuch *grievous Words*, as *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* xv. 1. are apt to *ſtir up Anger*; and their Room muſt be ſupplied by ſuch pleaſant Words as he tells us, *Prov.* xvi. 24. are *as an Honey-comb, ſweet to the Soul, and Health to the Bones*; ſuch as may beſt expreſs the tender Compaſſion we have of our Brother's Infirmities, and the charitable Deſires we retain of his Welfare.

XXII. We muſt be ſure to ſhew Humility and Love towards all. Our Betters if we admoniſh, it is beſt doing it by ſome Parable, as *Nathan* did King *David*, 2 *Sam.* xii. 1, *&c.* and give them Leave by an eaſie Application to judge and condemn themſelves: If our Equals, we muſt let it appear that we are urged thereto out of Friendſhip and Affection: And if we reprove our Inferiors, let us make them ſenſible how our only Aim and Deſire is to do

(*a*) *Biſhop* Hall's Contemplations on the Bible, *v.* 2. *l.* 8. *p.* 956. *Lond.* 1625. *fol.* (*b*) *Omnis animadverſio, & caſtigatio contumeliâ vacare debet.* Cic. Offic. l. 1. p. 38. Lond. 1629.

them

them Good. Theſe calm and mild Methods are much more likely to obtain the deſired Succeſs, than ſuch as are harſh and outragious; which, as they ſeem not well to conſiſt with Humanity, ſo neither with Prudence and Diſcretion: For all wiſe Men temper their Speech with Benignity and Mildneſs; and all good Men, when they ſee there is a Neceſſity of rebuking any, who through Humane Frailty or Folly have fallen into Miſdemeanours, do neither upbraid their Weakneſs, nor inſult over their Misfortune, but conſider how obnoxious they themſelves are to the like Temptations and Falls, *Gal.* vi. 1. and therefore uſe ſuch Language as may not only beſt expreſs their Charity, but be alſo moſt conducive to the producing thoſe good Ends they at firſt propoſed, *viz.* the healing their diſtemper'd Affections, and vicious Inclinations. In a Word, All Reproof ought to be ſeaſon'd with Diſcretion, Meekneſs, and Moderation; and then it is likely to be of the greateſt Uſe, and make the beſt Impreſſion.

XXIII. Not but that ſometimes harſher Terms may be uſed: "But then, as *Tully (a)* adds, it muſt be when mil-"der ones are found to be ineffectual; and even then all "Anger or Paſſion is to be avoided, and the Perſons re-"proved are to be made to underſtand, that 'tis purely for "their Good ſuch Severity is uſed." *No more (b) than is juſt and fitting, no longer than is juſt and fitting,* was a good Rule for Reprehenſion of Sinners: For however, upon ſome particular emergent Occaſions, it may be excuſable with ſome Heat of Language to expreſs a Diſlike of their Vices, yet it muſt be done prudently, and with Moderation, purely in order to their Amendment, and that by Perſons who have Authority ſo to do. Thus, for Inſtance, Judges may rebuke Criminals and Malefactors in proper Terms, how diſtaſtful and unpleaſant ſoever they may ſeem to the Guilty: And the Miniſters of God's Word are not only allowed, but commanded to *cry aloud, and ſpare not; to lift up their Voice like a Trumpet, and ſhow the People their Tranſgreſſions and Sins,* Iſa. lviii. 1. to *be inſtant in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon, and to reprove and rebuke,* 2 *Tim.* iv. 2. whoſoever may conſequentially be touched

(a) *Cic. l.* 1. *Offic. p.* 57. *&* 58. *Lond.* 1629. (b) *Non plus æquo, non diutius æquo.*

of

or offended thereby; yea, it is ſometimes their Duty, after the Example of God's Prophets in the *Old Teſtament*, and his Apoſtles in the *New*, with Sharpneſs and Severity, *Tit.* i. 13. to reprove particular Perſons, not only privately, but publickly too, 1 *Tim.* v. 20. in order not only to their Amendment, but the Edification of others. But when private Perſons, out of a charitable Deſign, reprove any of their Brethren, whom they obſerve to live bad Lives, there great Caution is to be uſed; and generally it will appear more adviſable to ſuppreſs all ſuch Vehemency of Speech as may any ways raiſe a Suſpicion of Anger, Prejudice, or Ill-will: For Reproof, if it be too bitter, may approach too near to railing; if too intemperate and loud, it will ſeem unreaſonable and immodeſt; and if it be too open, and publick, it will be accounted inhumane and barbarous: Which leads to another Thing required in Reproof, That it be ſecretly, and in private.

XXIV. 'Tis ſaid to have been a Saying of *Solon*, *When you commend a Neighbour, do it publickly; when you rebuke him, do it in private.* And indeed, however beneficial a publick calm Reproof may be in ſome Reſpects, yet in general it may ſafely be affirmed, That the more private the Correption is, the more effectual it is like to prove: It is our Bleſſed Saviour's Advice, *Mat.* xviii. 15. *If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee*, [by doing thee any Injury, and thereby offending againſt God] *go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone*; *i. e.* privately, and in ſuch a manner as may have nothing of Reproach or Shame joined with it; but ſo as he may thereby evidently perceive, that you do not this either to inſult over him, or to diſgrace him, but purely out of a Deſire of his Spiritual Good, and the Reparation of the Wrong he hath done: For an open diſgraceful Rebuke will rather harden a Man in his Sins, than reform him (*a*); and put him rather upon making an unjuſt Defence, than fall under a juſt Shame. Sore Eyes are ſoon offended at the dazling Rays of the Sun, and dangerous Wounds ſmart and rankle the more by being expoſed to the publick Air. Neither do thoſe Words of *Solomon*, *Prov.* xxii. 5. *Open Re-*

(*a*). *Præ pudore incipiet defendere peccatum ſuum, & quem vis correctiorem; facis pejorem.* Aug. de verb. Dom. Serm. 16.

buke is better than ſecret Love, make any thing againſt what hath been ſaid: For by *open Rebuke* is not to be underſtood that which is uttered before Witneſſes, but that private Reproof which is given to a Man's Face by another between them Two alone; and the Meaning of the Words ſeems to be this, That open Rebuke from a Friend that deals freely with us upon Occaſion, is better than much profeſſed Love that never ſhews it ſelf by any ſuch Effect: And ſo it follows in the next Verſe, *ver.* 6. *Faithful are the Wounds of a Friend, but the Kiſſes of an Enemy are deceitful: i. e.* The Rebukes of a Friend that pierce deep, are better than the Fawning of an Enemy; and therefore there is great Reaſon why he that thus rebukes a Man, ſhould afterwards find more Favour than he that flattereth with the Tongue, *Prov.* xxviii. 23.

XXV. *Socrates* one Day (*a*) openly at Dinner reproving one of his Friends ſomething harſhly, *Plato* ſaid unto him, *Had not this been better done in private?* To whom *Socrates* preſently anſwer'd, *And had not you done better if you had told me ſo in private too?* For all Perſons, I believe, had rather be convinced in private, than declared guilty by a publick Proclamation. Publick Rebukes are for Magiſtrates, and Courts of Juſtice; and private for Friends, who (if really ſo) will be for doing one by another as *Joſeph* thought to have done by the Virgin *Mary*, *Mat.* i. 19. They will be rather for covering one anothers Blemiſhes with Secrecy, than cry them, as we ſay, at the Market-Croſs; the doing the former of theſe is a certain Sign of that *Charity, which covereth a Multitude of Sins*, 1 Pet. iv. 8. but the other many times is of ill Conſequence. 'Tis generally thought that *Alexander* the Great killed his intimate Friend *Clitus* (*b*), chiefly, becauſe he did reprehend him before ſo great a Company: In which manner a young Man, being reproved by *Pythagoras* (*c*), was ſo much abaſhed, and confounded with Shame, that he immediately went and became his own Executioner. But then, as I have already hinted, as this hinders not the publick Reproof of Miniſters, or Magiſtrates, ſo there

(*a*) *Plutarch. de adul. & amic. diſcr. p.* 176, 177. *Francof.* 1603. (*b*) *Plut. ibid. p.* 177. (*c*) Charron *of* Wiſdom, *l.* 3. *c.* 9. *p.* 468. *Lond.* 1640. and *Plutarch. ibid. p.* 177.

may

may be ſome Caſes wherein private Perſons are not tied up by theſe Rules; as when the Offence committed doth tend to the Hurt or Prejudice of the Church, or Commonwealth, and there may be great Danger in delaying to declare the ſame; as when a Man plots the Subverſion of the Government, or the like: In which Caſe the Party offending is not privately to be reproved, but to be detected and diſcovered; the common Good being to be preferr'd before the Good of a ſingle (*a*) Perſon. So likewiſe is the ſame Method to be obſerved, if the Crime committed be greater than the Loſs of his Credit, who is the guilty Perſon, if it be publiſhed. When St. *Paul*'s Siſter's Son heard that a Company of Men had conſpired together, and bound themſelves with an Oath, neither to eat or drink 'till they had killed that Apoſtle; we find not that he went to reprove them for this wicked Deſign, but was ſent directly by St. *Paul* unto the chief Captain, to acquaint him with the ſame, *Acts* xxiii. 16. Otherwiſe, if there be any Hope that a private Reproof will be available, it is much rather to be made uſe of.

XXVI. Another Thing in this Caſe to be conſidered, is the Time and Seaſon for reprehending another; that which is moſt fit and proper being always to be preferred. A Brother therefore is not to be told of his Fault in the Heat of his Paſſion, or when he is in Drink, *&c.* but afterwards, when he is come to himſelf: As *Abigail* dealt with *Nabal*, who, by his Churliſhneſs, provoked *David* to ſo high a Degree, that he had like to have deſtroyed him and his whole Family, had not *Abigail*, by her Wiſdom and Preſent ſhe brought him, diverted that dreadful Stroke: But, upon her Return, finding *Nabal* very much in Drink, and knowing it in vain to admoniſh him when he had loſt the Uſe of his Reaſon, ſhe told him nothing of what had paſſed, leſs or more, but wiſely deferred it 'till a better Opportunity, until the Morning-light; and then, when the Wine was gone out of him, and he had ſlept out his Drunkenneſs, his Wife prudently laid hold of that Opportunity, and wiſely admoniſhed him both of his Sin, and the deſperate Danger he had thereby run himſelf into.

(*a*) *Melius eſt ut pereat unus, quam unitas.* Hieron.

XXVII. We are told, *Eccleſ.* iii. 1. That to every Thing there is a Seaſon; and, *Prov.* xxv. 2. that a Word fitly ſpoken *is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver.* And if there be a Time fit for every Thing elſe, why not for Reproof too? Certainly Diſcretion in the Choice of Seaſons for reproving, is no leſs commendable and neceſſary than Zeal and Faithfulneſs in performing the ſame. A Word ſeaſonably given, like a Rudder of a Ship, ſometimes ſteers a Man quite into another Courſe; and as one Blow beſtowed in the Striking-time is better than Ten delivered unſeaſonably, ſo there are ſome Times and Seaſons (*a*) much more proper and meet for Admonition than others; of which there is ſo great Variety, as not to be particularly defined: But in general it may be ſaid, That it is the beſt Time when there is moſt Hope or Poſſibility for Reaſon to be hearkened to. And the Neceſſity of watching ſuch Opportunities may appear from hence, becauſe otherwiſe there will be great Danger not only of miſcarrying and doing no Good, but even of bringing greater Guilt and Danger upon that Perſon whom we deſign'd to reſcue out of it: For, as it is ſaid of Phyſick, that it hurts, when it does not mend, and proves Poiſon to him whoſe Diſeaſe gets the Conqueſt over it, or hinders it from working; ſo ſuch fraternal Reproof, if it do no good, it is very likely it may do harm.

28. So that there muſt be ſhewed in Reproof great Judgment and Prudence, as well as Fidelity, and Love; and there muſt be a certain knowledge not only of the Fault, but alſo of the Offender's Humour, and Diſpoſition: "For there muſt not be, (as Biſhop *Hall* hath obſerved) (*b*) one uniform proceeding with all Men in "Reprehenſion, but that muſt vary according to the "Diſpoſition of the Reproved; for I have ſeen, ſays he, "ſome Men as Thorns, which eaſily touched, hurt not; "but if hard and unwarily, fetch Blood of his Hand; "others as Nettles, which if they be nicely handled, "ſting, and prick; but if hard, and roughly preſſed, "are pulled up without harm; and thence concludes, That "before ever he took any Man in hand, he would know

(*a*) *Mollia tempora.* (*b*) *Bp.* Hall's *2d. Century of Meditations, and Vows,* §. 12. p. 24. *among his Works.* Lond. 1625. fol.

"firſt

" firſt whether he were a Thorn of a Nettle." *Eraſmus* tells us, " There are ſome Jewels, which ſhine the more " for being ſteeped in Vinegar, and ſome for being " boiled in Honey." So ſome Natures are ſooner wrought upon by ſharp Reproof, ſome by milder Admonition. The skilful Phyſician, before he adminiſters the moſt ſafe known Medicine, doth not only enquire into the Diſeaſe, but likewiſe the Age, Conſtitution, Complexion, and courſe of Life of his Patient, as alſo the State of his former Health, and Inclinations, whether or no he was wont to be ſo before, and how long, and how often: So all theſe Accidents, and Circumſtances are to be examined, and enquired into by the ſincere, and faithful Reprover, and then ſuch Remedies to be applied as Prudence and Skill ſhall beſt direct. The Herb called Hellebore, as *Pliny* obſerves, *(a)* can do very much, yet Phyſicians will not allow it to be given to old People, or Children, or ſuch as are lean and thin; ſo Admonition muſt be ſo temper'd, that the Perſon deſigned to be made better by it, may bear it; and not only the Vice, but the natural Diſpoſition of the Sinner is to be conſidered.

XXIX. There is alſo ſome regard to be had of his Condition or Quality alſo; we are not therefore publickly to rebuke our Superiors, whoſe Duty it is to beſtow that Charity upon us, and ours on the other hand to receive it meekly from them: It is God's Command by his Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* v. 1. *Not to rebuke an Elder, but intreat him as a Father*; and to have that reſpect to his Office, that whenever there may be need of Exhortation, it be adminiſtered with all imaginable reſpect; and, without doubt, not only with relation to our Civil, but Eccleſiaſtical Superiors too, (from whoſe Mouth the People ſhould receive the Law, *Mal.* ii. 7.) and with relation to all thoſe, who, upon account of their Worth, Learning, or Knowledge, are placed in a higher Orb than our ſelves, we are to take great heed, That even when poſſibly there may ſeem an occaſion for Admonition, that the ſame be given after a due and regular manner.

(a) Plin. l. 25. c. 5. *in fine.*

XXX. In the laſt Place, it muſt alſo be obſerved, That all Offences, whether great or ſmall, are not to be reprehended indifferently or alike. Biſhop *Fell* tells us in the Life of the Learned, and Pious Doctor *Hammond*, ‘ (*b*) ‘ That the principal Thing he contracted for in Friendſhip, ‘ was a free uſe of mutual Admonition, which he confi- ‘ ned not to the groſſer Guilts, which Enemies, and com- ‘ mon Fame, were likely to obſerve, and mind Men of; ‘ but extended it unto prudential Failings, Indecencies, ‘ and even ſuſpicious, and barely doubtful Actions; nay ‘ beyond that, unto thoſe vertuous ones, which might ‘ have been improv'd, and rendred better. Wherein ſome, perhaps, may think him to have been too nice, and over-ſcrupulous, that have any Regard to the Words of *Plutarch*, who was of Opinion, That whoſoever, for ſlight and ſmall Matters doth reprove a Friend, eſpecially with any ſharpneſs, is like a Phyſician adminiſtring the moſt unpleaſant, and coſtly Medicines in the ſlighteſt Diſtempers: However, that a Difference is to be made between one Sin and another, appears from thoſe Words of S. *Jude v.* 22. 23. *Of ſome have compaſſion, making a Difference: And others ſave with fear, pulling them out of the Fire.* Sins committed thro' Ignorance, or Humane Frailty, muſt be diſtinguiſh'd from thoſe of Malice, Pride, or Preſumption, and be reproved after a different manner: The one with Lenity and Gentleneſs, the other with Sharpneſs and Severity; neither muſt Perſons of a tender and flexible Nature, be ſo ſeverely dealt with, as thoſe that are obſtinate and perverſe.

XXXI. And thus having premiſed the Conditions requiſite in fraternal Correption, and Admonition, the neceſſity thereof may appear, as from the expreſs Command of God by his Apoſtle, *Eph.* v. 11. So alſo from the Nature of the Duty it ſelf: If the *Jews* were forbid to ſuffer (when they could prevent it) their Neighbour's Beaſt to fall and periſh: Then certainly Chriſtians muſt much more think it their Duty, not to ſuffer the Soul of their Brother to be undone to all Eternity, if they can ſave it by good Advice: Which is a Duty not confined only to ſuch as are of the Miniſterial Function, (who cannot be

(*a*) p. 18. *before his Works*, Lond. 1684.

ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed always to have fit Opportunities) but indiſpenſibly incumbent upon all that either fear God, or wiſh well to their Neighbour. For he that is overtaken in a Fault, if there be not ſome charitable *Samaritan* near at hand, *to pour Oil into his Wounds, and bind them up,* Luke x. 34. may unhappily lie ſo long in his Sin, that there may be no more Life left in him. And I wiſh eaſie Obſervation did not make it too apparent, how great Degeneracy in Chriſtianity the Neglect of this Duty hath cauſed, and how manifeſt a Remiſneſs in Piety and Godlineſs, whilſt out of a ſneaking Compliance, and pretended Civility, or obliging Humour, Men ſeem either afraid, or unwilling, to take notice of others Faults, as if they feared to offend God, leſs than to offend Man; and rather than diſpleaſe his Enemies, are for the hazarding the Loſs of their own Souls, and the Souls of others too: For Men become guilty of the Sins of others, which they labour not (when it is in their Power to prevent) to prevent, as well as thoſe of their own committing. *Eli*, though otherwiſe a good Man, paid dear for rather winking at, than ſharply reproving, and puniſhing his Sons tranſgreſſions, 1 *Sam.* ii. 22. *&c.*

XXXII. And as this Duty is very requiſite, ſo likewiſe very advantageous too; it is one of the principal and moſt profitable Evangelical Commandments, *Mat.* xviii. 15. *If thy Brother treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his Fault, and rebuke him,* *Luke* xvii. 3. Firſt, the doing this, is profitable, and of great Advantage to him that performs this Friendly part, not only by engaging the other to return him again the ſame good Offices in time of need; but alſo by acquiring to himſelf a right to his Part in that glorious Prophecy, concerning them *that turn many to Righteouſneſs,* viz. of ſhining *as the Stars for ever and ever,* Dan. xii. 3. and that other Affirmation of S. *James* v. 19, 20. *If any of you do err from the Truth, and one convert him, Let him know, That he which converteth the Sinner from the Error of his Way, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a multitude of Sins,* i. e. If any Chriſtian doth err, like a wandring Traveller out of his Way, and tranſgreſs the Evangelical Rules, either in Faith or Manners, whoſoever takes him off from that vicious Courſe, and is the Means or Inſtrument, thro' God's Bleſſing, of converting him, doth ſuch an excellent Work

of Mercy, That God will accept, and reward the ſame with the free Diſcharge of his own Sins, if repented of, as well as pardon the Tranſgreſſions of him on whom the Change is wrought.

XXXIII. Again, the ſame is of infinite Advantage to the Perſon reproved: It is a Saying of *Homer*, '*(a) That the Advice of a Friend is good*; and nothing is more certain, than that they who reprove Men, when they do amiſs, are more beneficial to them, than ſuch as flatter and ſpeak them fair: For as thoſe Medicines which ſeem at firſt ſo irkſome, and nauſeous to ſick Perſons, do many times, if rightly applied, reſtore them to their Health, and procure their Satisfaction, as well as encreaſe their Comfort and Delight: So wholeſome Admonition, how bitter and diſpleaſing ſoever it may ſeem at firſt, will afterwards be found to be *ſweeter than Honey, and the Honey-comb*, Pſal. xix. 10. As one of thoſe excellent Ends, for which the Holy Scriptures were given, and for which the Apoſtle ſays, *They are ſo profitable, is Reproof*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. ſo he is in a miſerable Condition, who, when he needs, hath none to admoniſh him of his Faults. Holy *David* prays God, *Not to incline his Heart to any evil thing, to practiſe wicked Works with Men that work Iniquity*: but if he ſhould offend, then, ſaith he, *Let the righteous ſmite me, it ſhall be a kindneſs; and let him reprove me, it ſhall be an excellent Oil*, Pſal. cxli. 4, 5. And indeed, as a pious Man *(b)* obſerves, Reprehenſion, be it juſt, or be it unjuſt, whether it come from the Mouth of a Friend, or a Foe, it never does a wiſe Man harm. For if it be true, he hath a Warning to mend; if it be falſe, he hath a Caveat what to avoid: ſo that every way it makes him warier, or better. And therefore whoſoever is thus admoniſhed, or reproved, ought to take it in good part, and thank him that hath done him ſo good a Turn.

XXXIV. *Socrates* was wont to ſay, *(c)* That *we are not to think thoſe our faithful Friends, who praiſe all our Words and Actions, but thoſe that reprove our Faults*; and certainly there cannot be a truer Sign of Friendſhip than this: And

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(a) Ἀγαθὴ δὲ παῤῥῑφασις ἐστιν ἐλαίῃ, Hom. Il. λ. ν. 792.
(b) Dr. Baily's *Practice of Piety*, Lond. 1654. p. 181, 182.
(c) Stanley's *Hiſtory of Philoſophy*, P. III. p. 77. Lond. 1687.

conſe-

conſequently we ought rather by an affable Deportment, at leaſt, if not by expreſs Declaration, to encourage and invite them to this Freedom, than ſhew our ſelves uneaſie thereat, and receive the Performance of that charitable Office, with all imaginable Demonſtrations of Satisfaction and Delight. It is *Solomon*'s Obſervation, *Prov.* ix. 8. *Rebuke a wiſe Man, and he will love thee*; and, *Prov.* xxvii. 23. That *he that rebuketh a Man, ſhall afterwards find more favour, than he that flattereth with the Tongue*; and if he doth not, there is no doubt but he ought to do: For is it not madneſs to deſpiſe any Man's Counſel, and Advice, when it tends to the promoting our own Welfare? And therefore, whenſoever Admonition or Reproof is well deſigned, and duly adminiſtred, it ought to be favourably, and thankfully received; Neither ought he to be look'd upon as an Enemy, Who gives us good Advice.

XXXV. To prevent which, the wiſe Man hath endeavoured all he can, by telling us on the one hand, *Prov.* xiii. 10. That *he that regardeth reproof ſhall be honoured*; *that reproof entreth into a wiſe Man*, Prov. xvii. 10. and the like; aſſuring us on the other hand, That *Poverty and Shame ſhall be to him that refuſeth Inſtruction*, Pro. xiii. 18. That *he that refuſeth reproof, erreth*, Prov. x. 17. That *he that hateth it, is brutiſh*, Prov. xii. 1. and that whoſoever *being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy*, Prov. xxix. 1. which is no great wonder, ſince we may eaſily obſerve, That thoſe who are too big, or too wiſe for Admonition, do a great many Things that are unbecoming, and in no wiſe allowable. 'Tis well known how the Empreſs *Eudoxia*, not brooking the wholeſome Admonition of St. *Chryſoſtom*, (*a*) then Biſhop of *Conſtantinople*, cauſed her Husband *Arcadius* to ſend that Holy Man into Baniſhment, where, not long after, he died: But thoſe who are thus impatient of Reproof, would do well to remember that common Saying, *If thou canſt not endure to be reproved, do nothing worthy of Reprehenſion*.

XXXVI. However, this muſt not diſcourage any, and make them preſently give over admoniſhing thoſe for whom they have a (*b*) Kindneſs: For to perform this

(*a*) *Theo. Zwing.* fol. 2863. (*b*) *Cúmq; mones aliquem, nec ſe velit ipſe moneri, Si tibi ſit charus, noli deſiſtere cæptis.* Cato de Mor. l. 1. §. 9.

Duty

Duty well, though it be the hardeſt, yet it is the moſt neceſſary part of Friendſhip, which without this Advantage of admoniſhing, and amending one another is but a formal, empty, and unprofitable thing; and truly one would think a ſerious Reflection on that received Maxim, (*a*) The Fault which thou ſuffereſt in thy Friend, thou committeſt in thy ſelf, ſhould make Perſons perſevere in reproving, exhorting, and rebuking with *all gentleneſs, and long-ſuffering*, 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3. Notwithſtanding they may meet with ſome, who at firſt may ſeem unwilling to endure ſound Admonition, and Advice: Let them therefore ſtill be calling upon them, whenſoever they have any probable Opportunity of working upon them, not knowing but that at ſome time or other it may ſucceed: To ſay with cruel *Cain*, Gen. iv. 9. *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* as if it concern'd them not whether he ſink or ſwim, ſhews but very little Charity, or Compaſſion, and ſeems not very well to agree with the Apoſtle's Exhortation, *Phil.* ii. 4. *Look not every Man on his own Things, but every Man alſo on the Things of others.* The Difficulty or Uneaſineſs of ſuch an Undertaking, is no good Objection againſt it; but rather an Argument of that ſluggiſh Cowardice, which is always fanſying *a Lion in the way*, Prov. xxii. 13. or *a hedge of Thorns*, Prov. xv. 19. and ſo keeps Men from ſo much as attempting that, which if heartily ſet about, would appear eaſy, and pleaſant, rather than impracticable, and irkſome.

XXXVII. The wiſe Heathen (*b*) can inform ſuch, That they were not born only for themſelves: and the bleſſed Apoſtle, *Eph.* iv. 25. *That we are Members one of another*; and conſequently ought to endeavour all we can to promote one anothers Health, Safety, and Welfare; which thoſe can never be ſuppoſed to do, who connive at the Sin, or Error of a periſhing Brother: God therefore expreſly commands, *Lev.* xix. 17. *To rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him:* For to let him go unconvinced is to harden him, and to ſhew we bear him mortal Hatred, as the foregoing Words ſeem to imply. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart, but in any wiſe rebuke thy*

(*a*) *Amici vitia ſi feras, facis tua.* (*b*) *Non nobis ſolùm nati ſumus.* Cic. l. 1. Offic.

Neigh-

Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him. Hence *Aquinas* (*a*) truly makes this fraternal Correption, "an Act "of Charity, and Mercy; and ſo certainly the putting one in the right Road of Happineſs, who is travelling the direct way to Ruine, muſt needs be accounted; whilſt he that doth not perform this kind Office, when he hath an Opportunity, may be accounted no other than a treacherous Contriver of his Brother's Deſtruction; and if this Duty was thus impoſed upon the *Jews*, then *Chriſtians* to be ſure, who are by ſtricter, and more holy Bands of Brother-hood, allied to one another, are more earneſtly obliged to conſult, and endeavour the ſpiritual Good of their Neighbours, by prudently adminiſtring ſober Advice, and Admonition to reclaim them, when they do amiſs: And therefore the Apoſtle exhorts us, *Not to be weary or faint in well-doing, but if any man be diſobedient, ſtill to admoniſh him as a Brother*, 2 Theſſ. iii. 13, 14, 15.

XXXVIII. Yea ſo neceſſary is it for Perſons to be told of their Faults, that rather than not hear of them at all, they had better be put in mind of them by their very Enemies: Whence ſome will have the meaning of thoſe Words of *Solomon*, *Open Rebuke is better than ſecret Love*, Prov. xxvii. 5. to be this, That he doth us more good that reveals his hatred to us by railing on us, than he that profeſſeth he loveth us, but dare not reprove us; but ſince others will have the Words to ſignifie thus much, as I have already mentioned, That prudent rebuke from a Friend that deals freely with us upon Occaſion, is better than much profeſſed Love that never ſhews it ſelf by any ſuch Effect, I cannot but think this Interpretation to be the better of the two. However, ſince a learned and pious Author tells us, (*b*) it was a wiſe Man's ſaying, "That "he profited more by his Enemies, than his Friends, be"cauſe they would tell him more roundly of his Faults"; I will not be poſitive in the Matter: We learn indeed from *Plutarch*, 'That *Telephus* (*c*) was cured by the Ruſt 'of the ſame Spear which had given him his Wound;

(*a*) *Actus miſericordiæ, ac charitatis eſt.* Aquin. 2ª. 2æ. qu. 33. artic. 1. p. 68. col. 1. Paris, 1622. (*b*) *Ladies Calling.* P. I. Sect. III. §. 20. p. 65. (*c*) Plutarch. *de capiend. ex Hoſt.* p. 203. Francof. 1603.

'and

'and that *Jaſon* being troubled with an Impoſthume, that 'made him weary of his Life, going into the Army with a 'deſign to be ſlain in the Fight, received a cut with a 'Sword, that opened the Impoſthume, and made him 'a ſound Man.

XXXIX. But whoever it is that admoniſhes another, ought to be free from the ſame Crimes himſelf; *leſt*, according to St. *Paul*'s Determination, *Rom.* ii. 1. *he become inexcuſable, and condemn himſelf, whilſt doing the ſame things, he reproves another.* 'Tis eaſier, I muſt indeed confeſs, for a Man to find Holes in another's Coat, than to mend his own; as it is eaſier to preſcribe Medicines to a ſick Perſon, than to recover one's ſelf: But as St. *Jerome* (*a*) admires the boldneſs of thoſe who being guilty themſelves, are ſo ſharp, and ſevere upon others: So *Eraſmus* (*b*) will have it to be a ſign, rather of an haughty, and ambitious, than a pious Temper. *Hippocrates* directing how to diſcern, and make choice of a good Phyſician, among other things, will have him to be of a healthy Conſtitution himſelf, and one that hath prevented thoſe Diſeaſes in his own Body, which he profeſſes to cure in another's: And our Bleſſed Saviour directs thoſe that are to reprove others, *Firſt to caſt the Beams out of their own Eyes, and then they would the more clearly ſee to caſt out the Motes that were in their Brothers*; and not to be like *Plutarch*'s Lamiæ, or Fairies, that carried their Eyes in their Heads, when they went abroad, but when they came home, put them up in a Box: In a word, he cannot be a competent Judge of another's Crime, who is guilty of the like himſelf, and moſt People are inclined to yield ſooneſt to the force of that Advice, which is drawn (*c*) from Example.

XL. But againſt what hath been ſaid it may perhaps be objected that the Prophet ſaith, *Hoſ.* iv. 4. *Let no man ſtrive, nor reprove another*; but thoſe Words are to be underſtood of ſuch obſtinate, and hardned Rebels, who according to the following Words ſtrive with the Prieſts, whom God hath ſet over them to heal, and reform them; and trample under their Feet thoſe wholeſome Medicines

(*a*) *Hier. Ep. ad Tit.* (*b*) Eraſm. *in Similib.* (*c*) *Cum judex alias quod monet ipſe facit.* Ov. 6. *Faſt.*

offered

offered by thoſe Phyſicians of their Souls, ſo that all their labour in Admoniſhing ſuch would be in vain. Thus the Lord tells the Prophet *Ezekiel*, ch. iii. v. 26. *That he would make his Tongue cleave to the Roof of his Mouth, that he ſhould be dumb, and ſhould not be a Reprover to them, becauſe they were a rebellious Houſe*: And thus our bleſſed Saviour exhorts his Diſciples, *Mat.* vii. 6. *Not to give that which is holy unto Dogs, neither to caſt their Pearl before Swine, leſt they trample them under their Feet, and turn again, and rent them*: Whereby is meant, that we are not to throw away good, and charitable Advice, or Reproof upon incorrigible Sinners, who will return nothing for them but Reproaches and Contempt. If there be no hope of Amendment, (which is the End of Reproof) the ſame is to be omitted, or let alone; eſpecially when it is perceived to be ſo far from bettering the Party, that it is like to make him worſe: For as *Cicero*, and *Pliny* obſerve of the Ground about the City *Narnia* (*a*) in *Italy*, "That "Rain makes it full of Duſt, and Drought makes it "dirty": So ſome Perſons are made worſe by being reproved; and therefore *Aquinas* is of Opinion, that with reſpect to ſuch as theſe, it is much better to let them alone.

XLI. *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* xix. 7. *He that reproveth a Scorner, getteth to himſelf Shame, and he that rebuketh a wicked Man, getteth himſelf a Blot*; and therefore he immediately adds, v. 8. *Reprove not a Scorner, leſt he hate thee*: Where by Scorner, is meant one that manifeſtly appears contumacious, and incorrigible, refuſing to hear, deriding all Admonition, and becoming deaf to all manner of Reproof: And what elſe can it be but Folly to ſpend Labour in vain, in telling them of their Faults, who are not thereby amended, but hardned the more? For as *Plutarch* (*b*) obſerves, "All Admonition, and "Reproof is to be entertained, and received with ſome "Concern, and ſhew of Sorrow, and thoſe who only "laugh at it, and deſpiſe it, ſhew themſelves to be rather "Impudent and Sawcy, than Couragious and Diſcreet: "They ſhew themſelves to be ſo obſtinate, and obdurate,

(*a*) Plin. l. 21. c. 4. *ubi & Cicero citatur.* (*b*) Plutarch *de Auditione*, p. 142. *inter oper. mor.* Francof. 1603.

"as

" as to be uncapable of any Impreſſion, like callous Fleſh, " which does not eaſily receive any mark, or print ": And therefore *Cato* was wont to ſay, (*a*) "He had a greater Love " for thoſe that bluſh'd, than for thoſe that looked more " pale, when they were reprehended, than they did be- " fore ". In a Word, as thoſe who are troubled with a Rheumatiſm, or lie ill of a Fever, ſend for the Phyſician themſelves, and deſire his Aſſiſtance; while thoſe that are Frantick, Melancholy and Delirious, will not ſuffer him to come near them: So thoſe who rage, and ſtorm at Reproof are not ſo likely to be reformed, as they who receive it with ſuch Thankfulneſs, and Meekneſs, as plainly declare they are ſenſible of the Danger they are in. But here to all that hath been ſaid on this Head, I ſhall only add by way of Caution, That though this fraternal Correption be a Duty we owe to all, yet it follows not from thence, That every private (*b*) Perſon is allowed to pry into the Actions of other Men, or as *Solomon* words it, *Prov.* xxiv. 16. *Lay wait againſt their Dwellings*, on purpoſe to find ſomething to cenſure, and reprehend, which leads to another thing to be avoided, and that is Cenſoriouſneſs, or needleſs, raſh, and ſevere judging of another.

SECT. IV.

Of Cenſoriouſneſs, or Raſh Judging.

I. AMong the Offences of Speech, we ſhall in the next Place reckon Cenſoriouſneſs, or needleſs, raſh, and ſevere judging of another; becauſe not only the bearing falſe Witneſs againſt our Neighbour, not only all kind of Slandering, Detraction, Backbiting, and Whiſpering is forbidden, but alſo ſuch haſty, and rigorous Judging of him too; concluding and collecting more Evil of him than he appears to be guilty of, putting the very worſt Conſtructions that can be upon his Actions, and inferring a greater Guilt than neceſſarily attends them, by paſſing over ſeveral Circumſtances, which if duely conſidered, might

(*a*) Plutarch *de Aud. Poet.* p. 42. (*b*) *Admonet Dominus non negligere invicem peccata noſtra, non quærendo quod reprehendas, ſed videndo quid corrigas*, Auguſt. de verb. Dom. Serm. 16.

tend

tend very much toward leſſening the ſame; or from the accidental Commiſſion of ſome ſingle Action unadviſedly, or by Surprize, taking Occaſion to condemn him of an habitual Malignity, *&c.* Which evil Practice of thus cenſuring and judging others, is grown ſo very common, that we may eaſily obſerve it to have become the chief Employment and Delight of many Perſons, and the main Subject of their Diſcourſe: Neither can the greateſt Prudence in Behaviour, or Integrity of Life, perſerve any, whether high or low, from being aſperſed with ſome infamous Character or other; yea, not only their outward and viſible Actions, but even their ſecret Thoughts, private Opinions, and inward Diſpoſitions, are moſt unmercifully arraigned; and their concealed Deſigns, yea the inviſible Workings of their Minds, are very often cenſured, as well as their moſt apparent Practices and external Deportment.

II. But the Commonneſs of this Offence doth not make it any thing the more excuſable, or leſs ſinful; it muſt ſtill be acknowledged to be an arrogant invading God's Office, as well as an open Violation of thoſe great Commands of *exerciſing Humility and Meekneſs towards*, as well as *promcting Peace and Charity betwixt one another.* 'Tis ſtrange indeed, that Perſons ſhould not be only ſo fooliſh, as to buſie themſelves about what does not concern them, 1 *Pet.* iv. 15. ſo unjuſt, as to refuſe to yield that Pardon, and thoſe Allowances to others, which they ſtand in need of, and expect themſelves; and ſo inſolent, as, without any Commiſſion, Call, or Authority, to uſurp to themſelves a Power *(a)* of judging another Man's Servant, *Rom.* xiv. 4. eſpecially being ſo unqualified and unfit for ſuch an Undertaking: Men generally judging and pronouncing Sentence juſt as they are led by their own private Paſſions and Prepoſſeſſions; which oftentimes do ſo blind their Minds, that they cannot diſcern Things as really they are, and therefore are apt to proceed very raſhly, unjuſtly, and unfairly.

III. When the Cry of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* was ſo great, by Reaſon of their Sins, as to reach the Battlements of

(a) Quid in poteſtatem alienam irruis? Quid temerarius Dei tribunal aſcendis? Opt. l. 2.

Heaven;

Heaven; *I will go down now,* ſaith the Lord, *and ſee whether they have done altogether according to the Cry that is come unto me; and if not, I will know.* But ſuch rigid Judges are apt to paſs Sentence before they are rightly informed of a Matter, upon the leaſt Preſumption, moſt uncertain Report, or weakeſt Surmiſe; and being too much biaſſed by Prejudice and Ill-will, which hinders them from ſeeing Things in their proper Colours, they are apt to judge according to their Fancies, and conſequently to become very partial in their Cenſures: And that they do not proceed with that Equity, Candour, and Moderation, which are required, is evident from their taking Things that are doubtful in the worſt Senſe; from their aggravating ſmall Miſcarriages with the utmoſt Rigour, and inſulting over great ones with a moſt unmerciful Severity; yea, ſometimes they condemn their Brethren for Things that are no Faults at all. But generally they are like Perſons looking only on the knotty Side of the Arras, but taking no Notice at all of the fine Figures wrought on the right Side of the Hangings: For let a Man have never ſo many Accompliſhments, they will not ſee or take any Notice of them; but if they can ſpy out but one ſingle Failing in him, that one ſhall be made uſe of to eclipſe the Glory of all thoſe Perfections.

IV. Beſides, there are many Things which a Man muſt know firſt, before he can be able to judge of another, or his Actions; which Things being ſo far removed out of our Sight, we cannot be ſuppoſed to judge truly, how innocently ſoever it may be attempted. We cannot diſcern the Integrity of Mens Hearts, nor know their ſecret Thoughts and inward Diſpoſitions, or Deſigns. How unable are we to find out the Reaſon of the moſt common and obvious Appearances? much more is it beyond our Ability and Skill to judge of the Expediency and Equity of Things and Events, and find out exactly the different Ways and Ends which Providence makes uſe of and purſues in governing the World. So that to ſuch ſevere Judges we may apply the Words of St. *Jude, ver.* 10. They rail againſt, or *ſpeak evil of Things which they know not*: And no Wonder they judge amiſs, who paſs their Judgment upon what they cannot apprehend. *Chryſologus*, having mentioned the Sins of the Two great Apoſtles, St. *Peter* and

and St. *Paul*, as alſo (upon their Repentance) their Advancement in the Church of God, infers from thence, that we ought not too peremptorily to judge any Man; becauſe we know not but thoſe whom we condemn, God may accept; or whom we approve of, God may reject. When *Samuel* was ſent by the Lord to anoint one of the Sons of *Jeſſe* to be King, 1 *Sam.* xvi. 6, 7. as ſoon as ever he ſaw *Eliab*, he preſently fanſied him to be the Man, becauſe he was the eldeſt Son, and a goodly Perſon, both in reſpect of his beautiful Countenance, and tall Stature; *But the Lord ſaid unto Samuel, Look not on his Countenance, or on the Height of his Stature, becauſe I have refuſed him: For the Lord ſeeth not as Man ſeeth; for Man looketh on the outward Appearance,* [*i. e.* judgeth all Things according to the Out-ſide, and Shew, his Sight not being able to pierce deeper] *but the Lord looketh on the Heart.* Which ſince Man cannot do, he muſt needs be liable to infinite Miſtakes in cenſuring others: He cannot always gueſs by theſe outward Lineaments what Inclinations rule within. A clear Complection is not always a certain Sign of a ſound Body, nor a fair Countenance of a virtuous Mind. A beautiful Out-ſide may cover much Lewdneſs within; and as dirty Ground doth often contain good Seeds under it, ſo under an unpromiſing Appearance much Worth and Goodneſs may lodge. How long was *Democritus* took for a Mad-man? Neither was the Worth of *Socrates* and *Cato* truly underſtood by the People 'till they were dead: And, to come nearer Home, in the Life of the late Doctor *Barrow* we are told, "(*a*) That when he was young, "his Father had ſo little Hope of Succeſs in the Profeſſion "of a Scholar, (to which he had deſign'd him) and ſo "little Appearance there was of that Comfort which he "afterward received from him, that he often ſolemnly "wiſh'd, That if it pleaſed God to take away any of "his Children, it might be him."

V. It is our Saviour's Command, *John* vii. 24. Not to judge according to the outward Shew and Appearance, but to *judge righteous Judgment*: As if thoſe who did the former, could not well do the latter. And ſuch as paſs

(*a*) *Dr.* Iſ. Barrow's *Life, before the Firſt Volume of his Works.* Lond. 1683.

Sentence on every ſlight Colour of Probability, muſt needs be very often in the wrong: For daily Experience teacheth, That none are more liable and expoſed to the World's falſe Cenſure, than thoſe upright Natures that are honeſt and free; for ſuch Perſons, being conſcious to themſelves that they neither think nor deſign any ill, care not tho' all Men ſee the very worſt of their Actions, as innocently ſuppoſing they ſhall not be accounted worſe than they know themſelves to be. But, alas! this cenſorious World, being generally ſo bad it ſelf, is too too apt to conclude of every Body rather worſe than they deſerve, than better; and to put wrong Conſtructions on a free Demeanour, tho' never ſo innocent. When *David* was ſent by his Father to his Brethren in the Army, to carry them ſome Proviſion, and ſee how they did, (at what Time *Goliah* was inſulting and defying the Armies of *Iſrael)* his eldeſt Brother *Eliab*, hearing him ask how the Man that ſhould kill that dreadful and haughty *Philiſtine* was to be rewarded? moved with Pride and Envy, as well as Scorn and Contempt, ſaid angrily to *David*, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 28. *Why comeſt thou down hither? And with whom haſt thou left thoſe few Sheep in the Wilderneſs? I know thy Pride, and the Naughtineſs of thine Heart; for thou art come down that thou mighteſt ſee the Battle.* Where arrogating to himſelf that which is peculiar to God alone, *i. e.* to ſearch and know his Brother's Heart, and falſly judging him to be as full of Envy and Ambition as himſelf, he chargeth him with thruſting himſelf into the Battle out of ſome phantaſtical Deſign, when he was ſent thither by his Father to bring him Proviſions. So when the Viper, forced out of the Hole by the Heat which the Fire had cauſed, did faſten on St. *Paul*'s Hand, *Acts* xxviii. 3, 4. the Barbarians judging raſhly and falſly among themſelves, ſaid, That without doubt he was *a Murderer, whom, tho' he hath eſcaped the Danger of the Sea, yet Vengeance would not ſuffer to live.* In-like manner we read, 1 *Sam.* i. 13, 14. that when *Hannah*, in the Bitterneſs of her Soul, prayed unto the Lord for a Son; becauſe ſhe ſpake in her Heart, her Lips only moving, but her Voice not being heard; *Eli* the Prieſt, ſeeing ſuch Incompoſedneſs in her Countenance and Carriage, and knowing ſhe was newly riſen from a Feaſt, *ver.* 9. raſhly and uncharitably ſuppoſed her to have been

been drunk, and reproved her as if ſhe had been guilty of taking too much Wine. And when the Apoſtles, being filled with the Holy Ghoſt, began to ſpeak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance, ſome that heard them ſaid mocking, *Acts* ii. 4, 13. That *they were full of new Wine.*

VI. So great an Aptneſs there is in Men to believe ill of others, that we ſee any, even the lighteſt Suſpicion, will ſerve for that Purpoſe, and even the moſt laudable and innocent Practices ſhall not eſcape being cenſured and miſrepreſented; as the Devil aſcribes the firm and ſteddy Piety of holy *Job*, not to a conſcientious Love and reverential Fear of Almighty God, but to a cunning Policy and ſelfiſh Deſign, *Job* i. 9, 10, 11. anſwering the Lord, and ſaying, *Doth Job fear God for nought? Haſt thou not made an Hedge about him, and about his Houſe, and about all that he hath on every Side? Thou haſt bleſſed the Work of his Hands, and his Subſtance is encreaſed in the Land; but put forth thine Hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curſe thee to thy Face.* The ſame was obſerved by the Poet long ago, (*a*) That it is uſual to pervert and change the Names even of very Vertues: As a downright honeſt Man, is often ſuppoſed to be one of a mean Spirit; he that is circumſpect and wary, is deemed crafty and deſigning; he that is generous and hoſpitable, is thought prodigal and profuſe; he that is prudently thrifty and frugal, is judged to be ſordid and niggardly; he that is free and pleaſant in Company, is cenſured as looſe and diſſolute; and he that is ſerious and reſerved, as ſullen and moroſe; he that is ſtrictly religious and devout, is eſteemed hypocritical and ſuperſtitious; he that is charitable and liberal, is accounted popular and vain-glorious; he that is patient, and ready to forgive Injuries, is reckoned timorous and cowardly; and the like.

VII. From whence it appears how little a Perſon, of an honeſt Life and Converſation (*b*), ought to value the World's Cenſures. Honeſty is a Warrant of far more Safety than Fame; and he that ſteers by that Gale, tho'

(*a*) *At nos virtutes ipſas invertimus*, &c. Hor. l. 1. Serm. Sat. 3. (*b*) *Cùm rectè vivas, ne cures verba malorum*, &c. Cato de Mor. l. 3.

he may meet with ſome rough Waves, yet need not be afraid of a Wrack. 'Tis evident how often ſuch Surmiſes ſpring rather from Malice than clear Evidence of Fact, and that the Words and Actions of others are generally perverted and miſconſtru'd by ſuch rigid Cenſors. If a Man ſhould ſlip by Chance, or be driven by Force, or inveagled by Fraud, into a bad Place, or ill Company, it follows not thence that he ought to be condemned for a Debauchè, and a Friend of Publicans and Sinners: For if ſuch ſly and malicious Suggeſtions as theſe be entertained, many Perſons, either through Weakneſs or Credulity, through Prejudice or Inadvertency, may be too too apt to think ill of the moſt innocent and inoffenſive, as well as meanly of the beſt and moſt commendable Actions of Mankind. For it is commonly obſerved, That they who know leaſt, cenſure moſt; and the heavieſt Judgment comes from the worſt Livers. "In Things uncer-"tain, *ſays one* (*a*), a bad Conſtruction muſt needs flow "from a bad Mind; and none would imagine a private "Vice which they do not ſee, by a harmleſs Carriage "which they do ſee, unleſs either their own ill Practice or "Deſires had prompted them." For Men uſually frame both Opinions and Cenſures according to the Mould of Evil in themſelves; and thoſe who are ſo ready to condemn others upon the ſlighteſt Ground, are either bad already, or would be ſo if Opportunity ſerved. The ſharpeſt Tongues and worſt Lives commonly go together; as they who are moſt favourable in cenſuring others Miſdemeanours, are generally moſt free and exempt from Blame themſelves. Which is no Wonder at all: For theſe latter do ſo ſpend their Time, in reflecting on their own Lives, and reforming what is amiſs within themſelves, that they have no Leiſure to look into the Behaviour of others; whilſt the former are ſo buſie in pulling out the Motes they fanſie they ſee in their Brother's Eye, that they cannot obſerve the Beams that are in their own, *Mat.* vii. 3, 4. and conſequently muſt leave their own Defects uncorrected; becauſe they who are always Abroad, cannot well be ſuppoſed to know or mind what is done at Home.

(*a*) Feltham's Reſolves, *Cent.* II. §. 85. *p.* 429. *Lond.* 1647.

VIII.

VIII. But, alas! if they would duely weigh the Imperfections of Humane Nature, and conſider how much eaſier it is to diſcern a crooked Furrow, than to plow a ſtraight one, they would not ſo unmercifully breath out Condemnation, nor be ſo prone to think Evil, or entertain ill Opinions of others; but (as Charity directs, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 5, 7.) be inclined to believe and hope the beſt of every one, leaving what they know not to the Searcher of Hearts. It is the Apoſtles Advice, 1 *Cor.* iv. 5. *Not to judge any Thing before the Time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden Things of Darkneſs, and make manifeſt the Counſels of the Heart.* He is the only fit Judge, becauſe he only can diſcover every Man's Intentions and Purpoſes: And as it is his Property *to ſearch the Heart, and try the Reins,* Pſal. vii. 9. xxvi. 2. ſo it is his Prerogative to judge concerning the ſecret Motions of them; and therefore it muſt be great Impudence and bold Uſurpation for Men to attempt it, tho' they were qualified to judge others, as we have ſhewed they are not; and to undertake *to purge his Flour,* by ſevering the *Tares* from the *Wheat*; which Work God hath reſerved to be performed by himſelf at the great and terrible Day, *Mat.* xiii. 30. The Pſalmiſt tells us, *Pſal.* l. 6. That *God is Judge himſelf:* And 'tis fit indeed he ſhould be ſo, ſince he only is Omniſcient, and ſo beſt able to underſtand how to adminiſter true Judgment; and alſo moſt Juſt, and therefore will do the ſame without Reſpect of Perſons. He only *knoweth the Hearts of all the Children of Men,* 1 Kings viii. 39. *and underſtandeth all the Imaginations of their Thoughts,* 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Neither can any frivolous Excuſes, or corrupting Bribes, prevent him from *judging the World in Righteouſneſs,* Acts xvii. 31. and *rendring to every Man according to his Work,* Pſal. lxii. 12. In ſhort, we are told, *Heb.* xii. 23. That *God is the Judge of all:* And therefore it is ſafer and more commendable for Perſons to employ their Leiſure and Care in preparing their own Accounts, than examining thoſe of their Neighbours. And this is given as one Reaſon why we ſhould refrain from all undue, raſh, and harſh cenſuring the Perſons and Actions of others, both by St. *James* and St. *Paul:* For ſo ſaith the former, *Jam.* iv. 12. *There is one Law-giver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy. Who art thou that judgeſt another? And why,* ſaith the other, *Rom.* xiv.

10. *doſt thou judge thy Brother? or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy Brother? we ſhall all ſtand before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt: who will bring every Work into Judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good or evil,* Eccleſ. xii. 14.

IX. Another reaſon for abſtaining from the ſame is implied in thoſe Words of our Saviour, *Mat.* vii. 1. 2. *Judge not that ye be not judged: for with what Judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged, and with what meaſure you mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again:* as if he had ſaid, Do not raſhly, and ſeverely, rigidly, and without Mercy obſerve, and cenſure other Mens Perſons, Words and Actions, leſt, though unwilling, you meet with the ſame return from them: Yea, leſt you feel the like Severity from God, when he comes to Judgment, which you have all the Reaſon in the World to expect; it being but juſt, that you ſhould be dealt with both by God, and Man, as you your ſelves deal with your Neighbours; and therefore St. *James* exhorts thus, *Jam.* ii. 12, 13. *So ſpeak ye, and ſo do, as they that ſhall be judged by the Laws of Liberty: for he ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath ſhewed no Mercy.* Now what a dreadful Thing would it be, if God ſhould ſtrictly weigh all our Words, and Actions; yea, if he ſhould not look favourably on our very beſt, but judge us without Mercy? And yet how reaſonable is it he ſhould do ſo, if we be ſo unmercifull to our Brethren.

X. Our Gracious Lord is ſo far from being extream to mark what we do amiſs, *Pſal.* cxxx. 3. *that he, (remembring that we are but fleſh,* LXXVIII. 39.*) is ſlow to wrath,* Prov xiv. 29. *And doth not willingly grieve, or afflict the children of men.* Lam. iii. 33. *and when he doth viſit us,* Jer. v. 9. *he puniſheth us leſs than our Iniquities deſerve,* Ezra ix. 13. *and in his Wrath remembreth Mercy,* Hab. iii. 2. But this Mercy and Favour from him how can we expect, when we are ſo unwilling either by imitating his Example, or obeying his Commands, to vouchſafe to others the like? And as we cannot expect it from God, ſo neither from Man; none being more obnoxious to ſuch Cenſures, than ſuch Cenſurers themſelves: For by taking upon them to be Judges of others, they ſuppoſe themſelves leſs faulty than thoſe they reprehend, which puts the Perſons condemned upon a more ſtrict ſearch and enquiry into

into the Lives *(a)* and Actions of ſuch rigorous, and unmercifull Cenſors; and doth not only provoke, but in a manner authorize them too to requite them in the ſame kind. And thus do theſe buſy, and ill-natur'd Perſons, through the ſides of others, imprudently wound themſelves; not only becauſe they are ſeldom leſs culpable than thoſe they find fault with (and ſo *wherein they judge others, they condemn themſelves*, Rom. ii. 1.) but alſo becauſe they hereby aggravate their own Crimes, and make themſelves, as St. *Paul* there ſays *inexcuſable*; and uncapable of Favour and Forgiveneſs. But if they could be perſwaded to turn the Proſpective upon themſelves, and ſee what great need their own Actions have of favourable Conſtructions, they would certainly become more mild, and candid in cenſuring their Neighbours. This would pull down their Plumes, and make them more ready, and willing to paſs by the Faults of their Brethren, than to improve, or enlarge them; or at leaſt not to triumph over them in ſo inſolent, and barbarous a manner; it being to be preſumed, that no man would willingly have every little Slip, or ſmall Miſdemeanour of his own brought publickly upon the Stage, and made the Subject of every Bodies Diſcourſe; and therefore as St. *Auguſtine (b)* obſerves, It muſt be acknowledged to be very partial and unjuſt for thoſe to be ſo ready to find Fault with others, who are ſo unwilling to be took notice of themſelves, and yet ſtill to expect that every one ſhould commend, and extol them, and their Proceeding, whilſt they ſo haſtily, and pragmatically arraign their Neighbours: Which leads to another reaſon, whereby the unwarrantableneſs of this Practice may be demonſtrated, and that is, becauſe we are Sinners our ſelves.

XI. 'Tis very abſurd indeed for him to take upon himſelf to be Judge of another Man's Life, that cannot rightly guide his own, yea the Apoſtle pronounceth him *inexcuſable* that doth ſo, *Rom.* ii. 1. and that very juſtly; for thoſe who are themſelves guilty of the ſame Things

(a) At tibi contra evenit, inquirant vitia ut tua rurſus et illi. Hor. Serm. l. 1. Sat. 3. *(b) Iniquum eſt ut quis de alio judicare velit, & judicari de ſe nolit.* Auguſt. in Epiſt. ad Parentum.

which they reprehended in others, by condemning them pronounce Sentence againſt themſelves. It would look very inſolent; and unſeemly (whatever they may do in Priſon among themſelves) for Felons, and Malefactors at a publick Aſſize to get into the Bench, or Judgment-ſeat, and after they have been actually convicted of heinous Crimes, to pretend to condemn thoſe who were their Partners, and Confederates in perpetrating the ſame; and yet, without conſidering that this is their own Caſe, that they are all notoriouſly guilty, and that if God ſhould enter into Judgment, not one of them can be juſtified in his ſight, *Pſal.* cxliii. 2. how readily do Men take upon them to be Judges of their Brethren. In the Caſe of the Woman taken in Adultery, *John* viii. 7. 9. as ſoon as our Saviour had propoſed *That he that was without Sin amongſt them, was to caſt the firſt Stone at her, and they which heard it, being convicted by their own Conſcience* that they were guilty, *went out one by one, beginning at the eldeſt, even unto the laſt:* And if none would take upon them to cenſure others, but ſuch as are free from blame themſelves, there would be no need of Diſcourſes of this Nature. But alaſs! As the ravenous, and miſchievous Birds are commonly the moſt quick-ſighted, ſo the moſt culpable, and wicked Perſons are uſually the moſt ready and skillfull to ſpy out, and diſcern the Faults of others: But as the Tragedian condemn'd the Phyſician for pretending to heal other Mens Diſtempers, whilſt at the ſame time his own Sores were running: So the Lyrick *(a)* blames ſuch as are blear-ey'd, and blind in diſcerning their own Faults, but ſharp and quick-ſighted in finding out thoſe of their Neighbours: Which Cuſtom our Bleſſed Saviour condemns in thoſe Words of his, *Mat.* vii. 3, 4, 5. *Why beholdeſt thou the Mote, that is in thy Brothers Eye, but conſidereſt not the Beam, that is in thine own Eye?* Or *how wilt thou ſay to thy Brother, let me pull out the Mote out of thine Eye, and behold a Beam is in thine own Eye? Thou Hypocrite, firſt caſt out the Beam out of thine own Eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the Mote out of thy Brother's Eye.*

(*a*) *Cùm tua pervideas oculis malè lippus*, &c. Horat. l. 1. Serm. Sat. 3.

XII. It

XII. It is certain,(*a*) No Man is without his Faults, that *in many Things we offend all*, Jam iii. 2. *That there is not a juſt Man upon Earth that doth good, and ſinneth not*, Eccleſ. vii. 20. *and that if any Man ſay they have no Sin, they deceive themſelves, and the Truth is not in them*, 1 John i. 8. *If we ſhould juſtifie our ſelves, our own Mouths will condemn us*, Job xix. 20. And the very ſaying we are perfect, would prove us perverſe: For there is nothing in this World entirely perfect, the cleaneſt Corn hath ſome Soil with it, and Woe to the moſt commendable Life of Man, ſaith St. *Auguſtine*, (*b*) if God ſet Mercy aſide in judging of it. Happy would it be, if Men were as merciful to one another, as God is to them; but they ſeem naturally more inclined to judge, and cenſure others Failings than their own: Which proceeds partly from that innate Pride, which ſets them on to take more upon them, than either belongs to them, or becomes them; partly from that exceſſive ſelf-love, which prompts them to vilifie their Neighbours, as well as over-value themſelves; and partly from that envious Malignity, which is pleaſed with nothing more than finding, or making Faults: By theſe, and ſuch like corrupt Affections, which ſpring from depraved Nature, are Perſons ſeduced to this Practice: A Practice that even among the Heathens one of their (*c*) greateſt Orators, as well as one of their moſt famous (*d*) Poets, termed fooliſh, and wicked: So fooliſh, and ſo wicked that no conſidering Perſon will be guilty of it; which puts me in mind of what is reported (*e*) concerning one *Moſes*, an Abbot, and a religious Perſon, who being called to give Sentence againſt a Perſon that had done amiſs; brought along with him a bag full of Sand upon his Soulders, and being asked what he meant by that, "They "are, ſaid he, my Sins and Errors, which I can neither

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(*a*) *Vitiis nemo ſine naſcitur.* Hor. Serm. l. 1. Sat. 3. (*b*) *Væ etiam laudabili vitæ hominum, ſi remotâ miſericordiâ, diſcutias eam.* Aug. confeſs. l. 9. c. 13. (*c*) *Eſt proprium ſtultitiæ, aliorum vitia cernere, oblivi ſci ſuorum.* Cic. Tuſc. 1. (*d*) *Stultus, & improbus hic amor eſt*, &c. Hor. Serm. l. 1. Sat. 3. (*e*) *W. de Britain's Humane Prudence.* §. 9. p. 47. ed. 7. Lond. 1697.

ſuffici-

" ſufficiently know, and am ſcarce able to bear; How " then ſhall I judge of another? "

XIII. And indeed, it would be well if all Perſons would thus turn their Eyes inward upon themſelves, and look well to their own Words and Actions, for which only they will be accountable If they would reflect ſeriouſly on their own Infirmities, and Defects, and ſtrive to rectifie, and prevent them, rather than buſy themſelves in ſearching into their Neighbour's Miſdemeanours; unleſs it be to take Warning to avoid them; as a certain Muſician is reported to have ſent his Scholars to a bad Player, to learn to avoid his Faults. For as a Man can hardly exceed in examining and judging himſelf, ſo he cannot be too cautious in ſparing, and cenſuring others: The firſt is a Work very proper for him, a Work that he is qualified for to undertake, and which cannot but turn to good Account: whereas the other is an Undertaking, for which he is no way fitted, and authorized, and is not only unprofitable, but very often ſinfull too. This is frequently, as I have ſhew'd, expreſly forbid in Scripture; but the other is often recommended: Thus the Pſalmiſt, as he tells us, *Pſal.* lxxvii. 6. That he did *commune with his own Heart, and his Spirit made diligent ſearch*: So he exhorts others, Pſal. iv. 4. *to ſtand in awe, and ſin not, to commune with their own Hearts upon their Beds, and to be ſtill*; and daily to examine whether they have gone forward, or backward in the Ways of the Lord: and if we would thus judge our ſelves, the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Cor.* xi. 31. *we ſhould not be judged, i. e.* If we would examine our own Conſciences, we ſhould neither be puniſhed for them in this World, nor in the World to come; which will be a far greater Advantage than any that can accrue by condemning our Brethren.

XIV. And yet, *through the deceitfulneſs of Sin*, Heb. iii. 13. this practice is grown ſo very much in Faſhion, that Perſons, who otherwiſe ſeem to be of a ſtrict Life, and very juſt and honeſt in their Dealings, are often in this Particular very faulty; and thoſe who would abhor the very Thoughts of ſtabbing their Neighbour, or robbing him of his Goods, ſcruple not by raſh and unjuſt Cenſures to take away his good Name, on which perhaps he may ſet a greater Value than upon his Eſtate, or his very Life. Which proceeds from ſome Phariſaical Opinion of being

being more holy than others, and therefore they fanſie they may call them to an Account, and condemn them; but let ſuch call to mind the Words of St. *Paul*, Rom. xii. 16. *Be not wiſe in your own Conceits: neither be you high-minded, but fear*, Rom. xi. 20. *Let them conſider that in many things all do offend*, Jam. iii. 2. And that if they do eſcape tripping as well as their Neighbours, 'tis purely owing to God's Mercy and Favour; which ſhould rather make them pity, than inſult over their offending Brethren; and rather bleſs, and praiſe God for protecting them from falling, than ſo bitterly and ſeverely to cenſure thoſe that do.

XV. To conclude this Head, Let not one Man deſpiſe, or too unmercifully cenſure another, for though he be bad to Day, he may be converted to Morrow: And how knoweſt thou, frail Man, but that before the Morrow you may be overcome by the ſame, or the like Temptation? Either therefore ſuſpend thy Opinion concerning thy Neighbours Words, and Actions, or elſe ſpeak as charitably of them as thou canſt, by ſaying as little as may be, if they be evil; or by interpreting whatſoever ſeems doubtful in the beſt Senſe: Many times the Intention may have been good, when the Action is not ſo; and many times a Man through Ignorance, or Surpriſe, may do what he afterwards may be heartily ſorry for: Or if none of theſe Ways thou canſt clear thy Brother, then reaſon with thy ſelf, That ſome more than ordinary Temptation hath befell him, which, if it had befallen thee, thou mighteſt perhaps have done worſe, and give God Thanks that thou ſtill ſtandeſt, and pray to him that thou may'ſt not fall, 1 *Cor.* x. 12.

SECT. V.

SECT. V.

Of Scoffing, Deriſion, or Mocking.

I. THE next Offence of Speech with reſpect to our Neighbour, which I ſhall mention, is, Scoffing, Deriſion, or Mocking, or a ſtriving, and endeavouring to render others, (*a*) as ridiculous, mean and contemptible as we can, by reaſon of ſome Evil, or Defect in them: Which Sin, how injurious it is to a Man's Reputation, may be gathered from hence, becauſe, as a Pious Author obſerves, (*b*) "The generality of Men do rather take up "Opinions upon Truſt, than Judgment, and therefore "if they ſee a Man deſpiſed, and ſcorned, they will be "apt to do the like: But as *Aquinas* truly affirms, (*c*) The hainouſneſs thereof will appear to be leſs, or greater, according to the Dignity of the Perſon that is mock'd, and derided; and the greatneſs of the Evil that is thrown in his Teeth: Nay, ſometimes not only a Man's Reputation, but his Life too by ſuch Practices as theſe hath been taken away: As for Inſtance, When the Enemies of *Socrates*, that moſt excellent Philoſopher, and wiſeſt Man on Earth (in the Judgment of *Apollo*) could no otherways ſuppreſs the great Reputation he had got in the World, they hired *Ariſtophanes* the Comedian (whoſe Buffoonery is thought to have been too ſtrong for his Judgment) to perſonate him on the Stage, and by the Inſinuations of ſuch Interludes, (eſpecially in that Comedy called *The Clouds*) they did inſenſibly firſt convey a Contempt, and then a Hatred of him into the Peoples Hearts; ſo that at laſt, having brought their malicious Deſign to a head, they accuſed him of Contempt towards their Gods, and condemn'd him to die by drinking Poiſon: But afterwards the Athenians being awakned into a Senſe of their Injuſtice, in being through the Scoffs, and Deriſion of his Enemies firſt brought to deſpiſe, and afterwards to put to

(*a*) *Deriſio eſt cùm aliquis malum alicujus perſonæ, vel defectum, in ludum, vel riſum ponit, ut erubeſcat, & verecundetur.* Th. Aquin. 2a. 2æ. q. 75. (*b*) Whole Duty of Man. (*c*) Aquin. 2a. 2æ. q. 75. p. 139. Paris 1622.

Death

Death a Perſon of ſo great Probity and Worth, they expreſs'd their great Sorrow for it by ſlaying his Accuſers, and erecting Statues in his Honour, admiring him dead, whom before they contemn'd.

II. St. *Peter* indeed, 2 *Pet.* iii. 3. and St. *Jude*, v. 18. tells us, *That in the laſt Days, Scoffers, and Mockers ſhould ariſe*; and yet if we look back to former Days too, we ſhall all along find thoſe Perſons, of whom the World was not worthy, to have had the greateſt Trial of ſuch Mockings the Apoſtle mentions, *Heb.* xi. 36, 38. thus we read, *Gen.* xxi. 9. *That* Iſmael *mocked* Iſaac, which whether it was done by Words, or Geſtures, or both, we are not informed; as neither what was the Cauſe, but St. *Paul* repreſents it as ſome high Affront, when he gives it the Name of Perſecution, *Gal.* iv. 29. Thus Holy *Job* complains, *Job* xxx. 1. *That when his Condition was altered, and his Proſperity turn'd into Adverſity, they that were younger than himſelf had him in deriſion, whoſe Fathers he would have diſdained to have ſet with the Dogs of his Flock:* Thus alſo *Nehemiah* tell us, *Neh.* ii. 19. That when he, with ſome other *Jews*, conſulted about building again the Walls of *Jeruſalem*, (which had *been broken down*, *Neh.* i. 3.) *Sanballat*, and their other Enemies, *laughed them to ſcorn, and deſpiſed them*; as if they fooliſhly deſigned to undertake more than they could perform: But when the Wall was actually begun, their Indignation was doubled, and they mocked the *Jews*, ſaying, *Neh.* iv. 1, 2, 3. *What do theſe feeble Jews? will they fortifie themſelves? will they ſacrifice? will they make and end in a day? will they revive the ſtones out of the heaps of the rubbiſh which are burnt? Even that which they build, if a Fox go up, he ſhall even break it down.*

III. But more eſpecially do we find God's Church, and the pious Promoters of its Welfare, expos'd to the Scoffs and Deriſion of the Adverſaries thereof, both in the Old Teſtament and the New: Thus when King *Hezekiah* reſtored Religion in his Kingdom, among other things, He gave Orders for a ſolemn Paſſover at *Jeruſalem*, where it had been for ſome Time diſcontinued, 2 *Chron.* xxx. 6. or at leaſt not obſerved as it ought: And for the ſpeedier, and more exact Obſervation of the ſame, He ſent Meſſengers *Poſt from City to City with Letters* and Proclamations;

v. 6. 10.

v. 6. 10. which Meſſengers *were laughed to ſcorn, and mocked by ſome* that accounted God's Ordinances but light and trivial Matters, and not worth going ſo far as to *Jeruſalem* to be kept and obſerved. But 'tis no wonder they ſerved the King's Meſſengers after this manner, when the Meſſengers of God himſelf found no better Uſage, for when *the Lord God of their Fathers ſent to them by his Meſſengers*, [the Prieſts, the Prophets, and other Miniſters of his Word] *becauſe he had compaſſion on his People, and on his dwelling place: They likewiſe mocked thoſe Meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his Words, and miſuſed his Prophets, until the Wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his People, till there was no Remedy*, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. Hear *Jeremiah*, who was at the ſame time one of them, if not the Chief of them, making his Complaint, *Jer.* xx. 7, 8, 10. *O Lord*, ſaith he, *I am in deriſion daily, every one mocketh me: Thy Word is made a reproach unto me, and a deriſion daily: And I have heard the defaming of many: I am a deriſion to all my People, and their Song all the Day*, Lam. iii. 14. as Holy *David* himſelf alſo complained, how, for ſticking faſt unto God's Laws, *he became a reproach to his Neighbours, a ſcorn and deriſion to them that were round about him*: He was made *a by-word among the Heathen, and a ſhaking of the head of the People; yea confuſion was continually before him, and the ſhame of his Face did cover him*, Pſal. xliv. 13. *&c.* by reaſon of *thoſe Abjects and hypocritical Mockers at Feaſts*, that tore him, and *gnaſhed upon him with their Teeth*, Pſal. xxxv. 15, 16. and the *Drunkards that made Songs of him*, Pſal. lxix. 12. So that to uſe the Words of *Jeremiah*, Lam. iii. 63. *At their ſitting down, and riſing up, he was their Muſick.*

IV. And if from the Old, we paſs over to the New *Teſtament*, we may find St. *Paul* mocked by ſome becauſe he preached *the Reſurrection of the dead*, Acts xvii. 32. and all the Apoſtles, when they began to ſpeak diverſe Languages, were mocked by others, as if they had been drunk, *Acts* ii. 13. but they indeed could not expect any better Uſage, ſince their Lord and Maſter was as baſely reviled: For ſo ſaid our Saviour unto them before, *Mat.* x. 24, 25. *The Diſciple is not above his Maſter, nor the Servant above his Lord: It is enough for the Diſciple that he be as his Maſter, and the Servant as his Lord: If they have called the Maſter*

of

of the Houſe Beelzebub; how much more ſhall they call them of his Houſhold? Now that Chriſt himſelf was thus mock'd and derided, is too apparent; when he had related the Parable of the unjuſt Steward, and ſhewed how impoſſible is was *to ſerve God and Mammon too*, Luke xvi. 14. we read that the Phariſees, who were covetous, mock'd and derided him, when he went to the Rulers Houſe to raiſe his Daughter to Life again, the *People laughed him to ſcorn*, Mat. ix. 24. becauſe he ſaid, *She was not dead, but did only ſleep*, i. e. was not ſo dead, but that ſhe ſhould be immediately raiſed to Life again: But above all, how a little before his Crucifixion, he was made *a may-game and mocking-ſtock by the Jews*, all the Evangeliſts give an account.

V. St. *Matthew* ſays, Chap. xxvii. *v.* 29, 30, 31. That *when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right-hand*, [inſtead of a Scepter] *and bowed the knee before him*, [as the manner was to do before great Perſons] *and mocked him, ſaying, Hail*, [or God ſave you] *ô King of the Jews:* Then *they ſpit upon him, and* [further in ſign of Defiance and Reproach] *they took the reed and ſmote him on the Head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him again, and led him away to crucifie him.* St. *Mark* alſo, almoſt in the very ſame Words, Gives an Account of their blaſphemouſly deriding this *Prince of Peace*, Iſa. ix. 6. *and King of Glory*, Pſal. lxxiv. 7, 8. how being willing to ſet him out as a Mock-king, they took a few Thorns, and platted them into the Form of a Crown, and ſet it on his Head; and after they had mocked him in this manner, as long as they thought fit, they pull'd off his Counterfeit Robes of State, and put his own Cloths on him again, ſignifying thereby, their Dethroning him, as it were, from his pretended Kingdom, and then they carried him to the Place of Crucifixion, *Mark* xv. 17. *&c.* S. *Luke* likewiſe not only mentions, how *Herod with his Men of War ſet him at nought, and mocked him*, Luke xxiii. 11. but adds, moreover, *Luke* xxii. 63. *&c.* That *the Men that held Jeſus mocked him, and ſmote him; and when they had blindfolded him, they ſtroke him on the Face, and asked him, ſaying, Propheſie who is it that ſmote thee?* i e. Tell us, if thou art able to know, and declare Secrets, who it was that

ſmote

ſmote thee? which Uſage of our Bleſſed Saviour ſeems to refer to that Sport or Play ſo common to Children, (*a*) in which one is firſt blindfolded, and then he is ſtruck, and asked, who it was that ſmote him, and is not let go, till he names the right Perſon: And ſo it was here uſed as a Contumely, and reproachful Mockery toward our Lord: Againſt whom they alſo ſpake many other things blaſphemouſly. Laſtly, St. *John* makes mention of the ſame barbarous Uſage our Saviour met with, *John* xix. 1. *&c.* how *they ſcourged him; and platted a Crown of Thorns, and put it on his Head, and a purple Robe upon him, and mock'd him.*

VI. Neither hath his Goſpel, and his Meſſengers, been altogether free from the ſame Treatment in ſucceeding Ages: It was a Stratagem of *Julian the Apoſtate*, when he ſaw that Racks and Tortures availed nothing, but that by theſe Means the Chriſtians were rather encreaſed than diminiſhed, (as the Children of *Iſrael, the more they were afflicted by the Egyptians, the more they multiplied and grew*, Exod. i. 12.) to perſecute them with Scoffs and Jeers, that ſo he might laugh thoſe, whom he could not fright out of their Religion: And are there not in our Age too too many of his Diſciples, who ſcoff at Religion, and deride the Hopes of another World, as if they were Politick Stratagems of Cunning Stateſmen to keep People in Awe, and under Subjection? and who laugh at the Ignorance and Folly of thoſe tame and childiſh Perſons who are ſo eaſily deluded by the Men in Black, to believe Things which they never ſaw; who ſport with the very Flames of Hell, and with an audacious Impudence burleſque the ever-bleſſed and durable Trinity, and turn all the wiſe Diſpenſations of Providence into Sport and Ridicule. So exactly, and too truly are the Words of the Apoſtles S. *Peter* and *S. Jude*, (2 *Pet.* iii. 3. *Jude v.* 18.) fulfilled in our Time, where they ſay, That *there ſhould come in the laſt Days Scoffers and Mockers, walking after their own ungodly Luſts*: but the Number of them, renders them not the more excuſable.

VII. For not only with reſpect to ſuch profane and irreligious Perſons, but to all others, thoſe Words of the Prophet, *Iſ.* xxviii. 22. *Be ye not Mockers*, may be properly

(*a*) *Diſt.* Μυΐνδα, *vel.* μυῖα-χαλκῆ.

enough

enough directed; and would be more obſerved too, if they would ſeriouſly conſider their own Infirmities (*a*) and Defects before they deride thoſe of another Man, and how patiently they themſelves would take the like Uſage: For it cannot be deny'd, that there is in Humane Nature ſo great and ſo general an Averſion to Contempt, that there is ſcarce any Thing more exaſperating and offenſive; becauſe there is no Man hath ſo mean a Conceit of himſelf, as to think he ought to be made the Laughing-ſtock of a Company. When *Jeremiah* adviſed King *Zedekiah* to ſave his Life, by going forth, and yielding to the *Babylonians*; he anſwered, He was afraid of the *Jews* that were fallen to the *Chaldeans*, leſt, being delivered into their Hands, they would mock him, *Jer.* xxxviii. 19. And of all his Troubles and Afflictions, there is ſcarce any one holy *David* complains more of, or complains more againſt, than this; *O God*, ſays he, *Pſal.* xxv. 2. *let me not be aſhamed, let not mine Enemies triumph over me, let them not rejoice over me; neither let them wink with the Eye, that hate me without a Cauſe*, Pſal. xxxv. 19. And when he went with his Forces to take *Jeruſalem* from the *Jebuſites*, 2 *Sam.* v. 6. when they *ſpake unto David, ſaying, Except thou take away the Blind, and the Lame, thou ſhalt not come in hither*, (as thinking it impoſſible for him to take ſo ſtrong a Place;) he was ſo incenſed at this proud and ſcornful Bragg of the *Jebuſites*, (who preſumed their Fort to be ſo impregnable, as tho' they had none but the Lame and the Blind to defend it, it would be but loſt Labour to attempt to take it; and at their ſetting ſuch impotent Perſons, by way of Deriſion, to guard and defend it) that he could not reſt 'till he had ſtormed the Place, and took it, and ſmote the *Jebuſites* themſelves, as well as thoſe Lame and Blind whom they had ſet there, by way of Scorn, to make a Mock of, and diſgrace him and his whole Army.

VIII. We read indeed, 1 *Kings* xviii. 27. That the Prophet *Eliiah*, when by Fire from Heaven he was to convince *Baal*'s Prophets of their Error in worſhipping ſo ſtupid and inſenſible an Idol, whom tho' they called upon from Morning until Noon, yet there was no Sign of his

(*a*) *Alterius dictum, aut factum, nè carpſeris unquam: Exemplo ſimili nè te derideat alter.*

hearing them, that he mocked them, and ſaid, *Cry aloud; for he is a God,* [ſpeaking theſe Words in a plain Scoff;] *either he is talking,* [and ſo cannot attend to your crying;] *or he is purſuing* [his Enemies], *or he is in a Journey* [about ſome other Buſineſs], *or peradventure he ſleepeth, and muſt be awaked.* But then 'tis manifeſt theſe Scoffs were only made uſe of the better to diſcover and aggravate the Folly of thoſe Idolaters, and further the Peoples Conviction; which was what he chiefly aimed at, and was a pious and charitable Deſign: But otherwiſe, ſuch as mock and deride their Brethren, may be reproved in the Prophet's Words, *Iſaiah* lvii. 4. *Againſt whom do you ſport your ſelves? Againſt whom make ye a wide Mouth, and draw out the Tongue? Are ye not Children of Tranſgreſſion?* And that they be none of the wiſeſt Perſons, appears from hence; becauſe in holy Scripture they are commonly ſet in Oppoſition to wiſe Men, and coupled with Fools: As, *Prov.* ix. 8. *Reprove not a Scorner, leſt he hate thee; but rebuke a wiſe Man, and he will love thee.* And again, *Prov.* xvi. 6. *A Scorner ſeeketh Wiſdom, and findeth it not:* And therefore 'tis no Wonder they become ſo diſtaſtful to all Men of Sence. It is an old Saying, That *(a) no Man ought to admit ſcoffing Buffoons into his Favour.* And it is reported of that *Scythian* Philoſopher *Anacharſis, (b)* who was ſo eminent for his Temperance and Wiſdom, that when at a Feaſt, to which he was invited, ſome ſuch Perſons were brought in to make Sport, he could not be wrought upon ſo much as to ſmile at their affected Raileries and deriding Jeſts.

IX. And as ſuch Practices are odious to all wiſe and good Perſons, ſo likewiſe to God himſelf, who, as *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* iii. 34. *doth ſurely ſcorn the Scorner,* (whom *Calvin (c)* makes Tranſgreſſors of the Ninth Commandment:) And, to ſhew how abominable they are in his Eye-ſight, hath not only declared, *Prov.* xix. 29. That *Judgments are prepared for them,* but hath alſo frequently inflicted the ſame. Thus *Ham,* the wicked and ungracious Son of *Noah,* inſtead of being affected with Pity and Shame at his Father's Miſcarriage, not only mock'd himſelf, but

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(a) Nemo ſibi mimos accipere Debet favori. (b) Stanley's *Hiſt. of Philoſophy,* P. I. p. 56. Lond. 1687. *(c)* Calv. *Inſtit.* l. 2. c. 8. *in Præcept.* qto. p. 78. col. 2. Genev. 1592.

call'd

call'd in more Company to ſcoff at him: For which baſe Act he had a Curſe entail'd on him and his Poſterity, and ratified and confirmed by God himſelf, *Gen.* ix. 22, 25. who hath elſewhere declared, *Prov.* xxx. 17. That *the Eye that mocketh at his Father, and deſpiſeth to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley ſhall pick it out, and the young Eagles ſhall eat it: i. e.* Such Children ſhall come to an untimely End, and be denied Burial; thereby ſetting out thoſe horrid Judgments which ſuch inhumane and unnatural Sinners muſt expect by ſuch temporal Evils, as amongſt Men are generally moſt dreadful. Thus alſo *Iſhmael*, for mocking *Iſaac*, *Gen.* xxi. 9, *&c.* was baniſhed the pleaſant Land, and confined to a barren Wilderneſs; and the Princes of *Succoth*, for contemptuouſly upbraiding *Gideon*, had their Fleſh torn in pieces with Briars and Thorns, *Judg.* viii. 6, 7, 16. Thus *Michal*, for mocking *David* when he danced before the Ark, was puniſhed with Barrenneſs; for we are told, 2 *Sam.* vi. 16, 20, 23. and 1 *Chron.* xv. 29. That *as the Ark of the Lord came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's Daughter, ſeeing King David leaping and dancing before the Lord,* (to expreſs his inward Joy) *ſhe deſpiſed him in her Heart.* And when he returned Home, ſhe manifeſted the ſame by opprobrious Language, mocking him, and ſaying, by way of Deriſion and Contempt, *How glorious was the King of Iſrael to Day, who uncovered himſelf in the Eyes of the Handmaids of his Servants, as one of the vain Fellows ſhamelеſly uncovereth himſelf!* And then it follows, *Therefore,* or becauſe, *ſhe derided her Husband, ſhe was puniſhed with perpetual Barrenneſs* and *had no Child to the Day of her Death.* Thus alſo thoſe ill-bred Children, that mocked the Prophet *Elijah*, were tore in pieces by Bears, 2 *Kings* ii. 23, 24. Thus *Julian* the Apoſtate, who made Chriſtianity a Deriſion, expired in a moſt hideous manner; and *Machiavel*, that mocking Atheiſt, died ignominiouſly in the Priſon of *Florence.* To all which we may add thoſe Judgments threatned thoſe ſcornful Rulers in *Jeruſalem Iſaiah mentions*, Iſa. xxviii. 14. and thoſe denounced by *Ezekiel* againſt the *Ammonites*, in theſe Words, *Ezek.* xxv. 3, *&c. Thus ſaith the Lord God, Becauſe thou ſaidſt Aha againſt my Sanctuary, when it was prophaned; and againſt the Land of Iſrael, when it was deſolate; and againſt the Houſe of Judah, when they went into Captivity:*

(ſcoffing and rejoicing at the Miſeries of my People.) *Behold therefore, I will deliver thee to the Men of the Eaſt* (*i. e.* the *Babylonians*) *for a Poſſeſſion.* And *becauſe thou haſt clapped thine Hands, and ſtamped with the Feet,* (by way of Deriſion and Inſulting) *and rejoiced in Heart with all thy Deſpite againſt the Land of Iſrael: Behold therefore, I will ſtretch out mine Hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a Spoil to the Heathen; and I will cut thee off from the People, and cauſe thee to periſh out of the Countries, and will deſtroy thee.*

X. 'Tis an old Saying, (*a*) That to mock and deride a good Man, is a Thing moſt deteſtable and wicked; to deride a bad Man is cruel; and to do ſo indeed by any Man is inhumane and barbarous: Neither can that Queſtion of St. *Paul, Rom.* xiv. 10. *Why doſt thou ſet at nought thy Brother?* admit of any reaſonable Anſwer or Excuſe; for when Men are mock'd and deſpiſed, 'tis either on Account of their Calamities, Infirmities, or Sins. Now as to the firſt of theſe, the Miſeries, Misfortunes, and Calamities that befall Mankind, as Sickneſs, Poverty, *&c.* they all come by the Direction and Appointment of Almighty God, who, as he thinks fit, raiſeth up one, and pulleth down another: And therefore Perſons thus afflicted, ought not to be the Objects of Scorn and Deriſion. *Solomon* therefore ſays, *Prov.* xvii. 5. *Whoſo mocketh the Poor reproacheth his Maker, and thoſe who are glad at Calamities ſhall not be unpuniſhed.* For what can be more barbarous, Than to be derided and inſulted over in time of Affliction, as *David* was by his Enemies, *Pſal.* lxix. 12. *Jeremiah* by the *Jews, Jer.* xx. 7. and Chriſt by the Soldiers, *John* xix. 2. yea the Pſalmiſt complains of this as the height of Wickedneſs, *Pſal.* lxix. 26. *They perſecute him whom thou haſt ſmitten, and talk to the Grief of thoſe whom thou haſt wounded.* It is the Lord, ſays *Hannah,* 1 *Sam.* ii. 7. *That maketh poor, and maketh rich, that bringeth low, and lifteth up;* and *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xxii. 2. *That the Rich and Poor meet together, but the Lord is the Maker of them all:* And therefore, ſays the Son of *Sirach, Eccluſ.* vii. 11. *Laugh no Man to ſcorn in the bitterneſs of his Soul, for there is one which*

(*a*) *Irridere pium, nefas eſt, impium, immane; Hominem, inhumanum.*

humbleth

humbleth and exalteth: But above all, they muſt be confeſt to be very Wicked indeed, who inſult over thoſe in Calamities, whom themſelves have made miſerable: Like the cruel *Philiſtines*, who firſt *put out Sampſon's Eyes, and then carried him about to make them ſport*, Judg. xvi. 21. 25. or like *Ageſilaus*, who, when he was Governour of the *Lacedæmonians*, being very much in Debt, but unwilling (tho' very Rich) to pay what he ow'd, he got the Bonds and Writings out of his Creditors Hands, and made a Fire of them, in the mean time, jeering thoſe he had undone, ſaying, (a) *He never ſaw a Fire burn clearer, or brighter before.*

XI. And as we are not to deride any for their Calamities, ſo neither for their Infirmities, whether of Body or Mind; for the doing this is an arraigning and reproaching the All-wiſe Creator, who beſtows the Excellencies of both as he pleaſeth, and could have ſent ſuch Scoffers into the World with the ſame Deformity of Body, or Weakneſs of Underſtanding, which they laugh ſo much at in another. I have read of a Miniſter, who being ſomewhat miſ-ſhapen, was ſtill made the Mocking-ſtock of one of his prophane and ungodly Pariſhioners, till one Day entring the Church, juſt as the Miniſter was repeating thoſe Words of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* c. 3. *Know ye that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us, and not we our ſelves*; the injurious Scoffer, through God's Grace and Mercy, became ſo ſenſible of his Wickedneſs, as never more to be guilty of the ſame: For, however, as the Poet (b) obſerves, He that is Sound and without Defect may deride the Infirmities of others: Yet certainly, as we are not to condemn any Man's Meanneſs, when we know not his Deſtiny; ſo neither ought we to deſpiſe any for that which they cannot help: But moſt ridiculous, and abſurd is it, for thoſe to mock at the Infirmities of their Neighbours, who labour under the ſame, or the like Misfortunes themſelves; as one is ſaid to have derided (c) *Leo Byzantius*, for ſome blemiſh in his Eyes, when he himſelf in the mean time was Crook-back'd.

(a) *Se nunquam clarius lumen, aut ignem vidiſſe puriorem.* Plut. *in Lacon.* (b) *Loripedem rectus derideat, Æthiopem albus.* Juv. (c) *Eraſm. Adag. Chiliad.* 3ᵃ. *Centur.* 2. *Adag.* 21. p. 617. Baſil. 1526.

XII. Laſtly, The very Sins of Men, though 'tis true they have more of their Will and Conſent, yet conſidering nothing makes Men more miſerable than they, they ſeem therefore to deſerve our Pity and Compaſſion, rather than our Deriſion and Scorn; eſpecially if we call to mind how ſubject we our ſelves are to the like Temptations, and how liable to be overcome by them too, were it not for God's infinite Mercy and reſtraining Grace: And therefore it behoves us rather with the moſt profound Gratitude to look to Heaven, (*from whence cometh our Help*, Pſal. cxxi. 2.) than with Contempt and Diſdain on our Fellow-Creatures. To conclude this Head, it is the ſtrangeſt way imaginable of relieving a poor indigent, or afflicted Wretch to laviſh out Wit upon him after ſuch a ſcurrilous manner, and ſo barbarouſly to upbraid his Miſery: When as in all ſuch Caſes Compaſſion becomes a Debt, which if we were not obliged to pay, St. *Paul* would not have commanded us *to comfort one another*, 1 Theſ. iv. 18. nor St. *Peter*, *to have compaſſion one of another, and to be pitiful and courteous*, 1 Pet. iii. 8. neither would St. *John* have made this *opening the Bowels of Compaſſion*, an evident Sign of the *Love of God's dwelling in us*, 1 *Joh.* iii. 17. Hence we are required, *Rom.* xii. 15. *to weep with them that weep, as well as to rejoyce with them that do rejoyce*; and with a Chriſtian Sympathy to be affected as well with the Evil that befalls them, as with the Good; *Remembring them that are in Bonds, as bound with them*, Heb. xiii. 3. *and them which ſuffer Adverſity, as being our ſelves alſo in the Body*; and ſo whilſt living ſubject to the ſame Afflictions: It being but reaſonable that *the Members ſhould have the ſame care one for another*, 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26, 27. and as in the Body every Member hath a Fellow-feeling with each other, *and whether one Member ſuffer, all the Members ſuffer with it, or one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoyce with it*; ſo we, *who are all Members of the Myſtical Body of Chriſt*, ought to be ſenſibly affected with one anothers Misfortunes.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Of Contumely, or Reproach.

I. THE next Thing that comes under our Conſideration, is *Contumely* or *Reproach*, which is an angry *(a)* and publick Violation of anothers Honour and Reputation by falſe or undecent Speeches, Geſtures, or Actions, on purpoſe to diſgrace him: And it differs from *Defamation* in this, That *Defamation* may be of one Man to another in the Abſence of the Defamed; but *Contumely* is not but to the Party preſent, or in the Preſence of ſuch as have a relative Repreſentation of the Perſon Contumelioufly reproached: It being a ſpeaking of ſuch Words to a Perſon, as may eaſily be perceived to proceed from Contempt, Anger, Hatred, or Ill-will; ſuch as do naturally tend to beget in thoſe that hear them, an ill Opinion of the Perſon reproached; and in him too Anger, and Wrath, as knowing them to be deſtructive of his Reputation, or prejudicial to his Intereſts.

II. The famous Lawyer *Ulpianus*, will have the Word *Contumely* derived from the *Latin* Word, *(b)* which ſignifies to *Deſpiſe*, becauſe no one will reproach any, whom he does not in his Heart contemn. Thus *Nabal*'s denying *David*'s Requeſt, and malicioufly Reproaching him, proceeded from a mean Conceit he had of him, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 10, 11. *Who is David*, ſays he, *and who is the Son of Jeſſe? There be many Servants now adays that break away every Man from his Maſter: Shall I then take my Bread and my Water, and my Fleſh that I have killed for my Shearers, and give it unto Men, whom I know not from whence they be?* Firſt he ſpeaks ſlightly of *David*'s Perſon, and by way of Contempt, asketh, Who he was? as if a Perſon ſo famous for his Vertues and good Parts, for his Victories over *Goliah*, and the reſt of God's Enemies, as well as for his Marriage with the King's Daughter, and who not long before was in ſo great Eſteem both in Court and Country, could be ſo much unknown to him, as that he needed to ask, Who *David* was? And then from this Contempt followed *Nabal*'s *Contumely* and *Reproach*, as if *David* and his Follow-

(a) Aquin. 2a. 3æ. qu. 72. p. 136. col. 1. Paris 1622. *(b)* *Contumelia à contemnendo.*

ers were no better than a Company of Runnagates and Vagabonds, that had left their proper Callings and Places of Abode, to live an idle Course of Life in the *Wilderness of* Paran. And as contemptuously did *Rabshakeh*, reproach King *Hezekiah*, 2 *Kings* xviii. 17. &c. saying to those he sent to treat with him, *What Confidence was this wherein thou trustest? thou sayest* (but they are but vain Words) *I have counsel and strength for the War: Now therefore, I pray thee, give Pledges to my Lord, the King of Assyria, and I will deliver thee* Two *thousand Horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them: How then wilt thou turn away the Face of one Captain of the least of my Master's Servants*, &c.

III. But how foolish this is, and wicked, appears not only from the Words of *Solomon*, who says, *Prov.* xi. 12. *He that is void of Wisdom, despiseth his Neighbour*; but also from the Command of God himself, *Deut.* xxv. 3. *Who would not have the Jews beat any Offender too much, lest their Brother should seem vile unto them*: And indeed common Charity doth oblige us rather to suppress, and stifle all such contemptuous Motions of the Heart, than to vent them in reproachful Language, and vilifying Expressions: For such natural Imperfections especially, as meanness of Condition, dullness of Parts, Weakness, or Deformity of Body, or any unavoidable Disasters, or involuntary Defects; for this is an audacious Reproaching God himself, who by his All-wise Providence, orders and disposes every thing here below, as well as in the highest Heavens above. 'Tis true indeed, it is a very easie matter to vent Reproaches enough, as (*a*) *Homer* words it, *To load a large Ship*; but as he there calls those that do so *Fools*, (*b*) and *silly Persons*, so doth *Solomon* shew himself to have been of the same Opinion, where he says, *Prov.* xviii. 6. *A Fools Lips enter into Contention: But he that refraineth his Lips is wise*, Prov. x. 19. and how dangerous also this Practice is, appears from the Words of his pious Father, *Psal.* xv. 3. where he declares, That *he that taketh up*, or receiveth *a Reproach*, much more then he that utters one, *shall never abide in God's holy Hill*; nor in his Tabernacle here below; and that no wonder, since it is of a more hanious nature,

(*a*) Homer *Il.* Υ. v. 247. (*b*) *ibid.* v. 244.

than

than a common *(a)* Injury: I can willingly, ſays one, *(b)* bear an Injury if it be free from Reproach.

IV. Hence all wiſe Perſons (conſidering that all ſuch contumelious Language proceeds generally from groſs Ignorance, or ſome diſorder of Mind or other, and that ſuch as make uſe of it become the greater Sufferers of the two, and deſtroy their own Happineſs, more than that of the Perſons they reproach) have thought them fitter Objects of their Compaſſion, than their Anger; and have been ſo far from reſenting ſuch Uſage, as ſcarce to take any Notice of it at all. All the Anſwer *Diogenes* (*c*) gave to one who abuſed him thus, was only this, "No Man "will believe you, when you ſpeak ill of me, any more "than they would me, if I ſhould ſpeak well of you": With whom we may join that great Chancellour (*d*) of *England*, who, when Cardinal *Woolſey* told him he was the verieſt Fool in the Council, made only this Reply, "God be thanked that my Maſter (meaning the King) "hath but one Fool here." And indeed, Innocency is the beſt Antidote againſt ſuch poiſonous Arrows; and a clear Soul, is, like a ſtrong Caſtle, impregnable againſt all the Artillery of depraving Spirits, and contumelious Tongues; a good Man that values himſelf upon Conſcience, not Opinion; upon what God knows, not what the World ſays, heeds Reproaches no more, than if having a Jewel he knew to be right, he would be concerned if another, who underſtood it not ſo well, ſhould ſay it was a Counterfeit. That excellent Philoſopher, *Socrates*, being told that one ſpoke ill of him, ſaid only, "It was be-"cauſe he had not yet learnt to ſpeak well: And when, as I have already mentioned, he was perſonated on the Stage by *Ariſtophanes*, and obſerved how the Strangers (who knew him not, enquired who that *Socrates* was, whom the Comedian abuſed, *(e)* he preſently roſe up (having before hand for that Purpoſe, choſe the moſt conſpicuous Seat in the Theatre) and all the while the Play laſted con-

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(a) Injuria levior res eſt. Nonius Marcellus. *(b) Patior facilè injuriam, ſi eſt vacua à contumelia.* Pacuvius. *(c)* Stanley's *Hiſt. of Philoſophy.* P. VII. p. 415. Lond. 1687. *(d)* Britain's *Humane Prudence*, §. 9. p. 57. Lond. 1697. *(e)* Stanley *(ùt ſupra)* B. III. p. 91.

tinued

tinued in that Poſture, laughing: And being asked by one, If it did not vex him to ſee himſelf brought ſo upon the Stage? he anſwered, "Not at all, for methinks, ſaid he, "I am at a Feaſt, where every one enjoys me.

V. But as this ill Uſage of another doth ſometimes proceed from Contempt; ſo ſometimes again it is the Effect of cauſeleſs, and immoderate Anger, and the venting of ſome inordinate Paſſion; whence the Apoſtle joins Bitterneſs, Wrath, Anger, Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking together, *Eph.* iv. 31. *Col.* iii. 8. and therefore all ſuch Railing and Reviling ought to be ſuppreſt, becauſe Saint *James* tells us, *Jam.* i. 20. *The Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God:* Yea, we are not ſo much as to *render railing for railing*, which St. *Peter* accounts to be *rendring evil for evil*, 1 Pet. iii. 9. The doing which is very improper, and unprofitable: For the faireſt Language is the moſt effectual, and the calmeſt way of diſcourſing the moſt Prevalent; whilſt rude Speech and contemptuous Reflections do but exaſperate, and harden thoſe againſt whom they are directed, and make them more obſtinate in their Ways, and Opinions. Few Perſons become either wiſe, or better by ill Words, and therefore *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* xvi. 21. *The ſweetneſs of the Lips, increaſeth Learning*; and again, *Prov.* xv. 1. That *a ſoft Anſwer turneth away Wrath, but grievous Words ſtir up Anger.* The God himſelf of Order, and of Wiſdom appeared not in the great and ſtrong *Wind*, nor in the impetuous *Earthquake*, nor the raging *Fire*, but in the *ſtill ſmall Voice*, 1 Kings xix. 11, 12. and Rage and virulency of Language doth ſerve rather to confound Things, than to compoſe them: It is ſo very biting and provoking, that by reaſon of its piercing ſo deeply, and cauſing ſo grievous ſmart, it is compared in holy Writ to a Scourge, *Job* v. 21. a Sword, *Prov.* xii. 18. a ſharp Raſour, *Pſal.* lii. 2. a Knife, *Prov.* xxx. 14. and the like; the Smart whereof, when any feel, they are naturally enraged, and ſtir'd up to requite ſuch contumelious Uſage with the like, or perhaps to ſtudy ſome higher Revenge: So that the Royal Pſalmiſt doth not without great Reaſon ſeem to propoſe Abſtinence from ſuch ill Language as the firſt Step towards living happily, where he ſays, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 12, 13. *What Man is he that deſireth Life, and loveth many*

Days,

Days, that he may ſee good? keep thy Tongue from Evil, and thy Lips from ſpeaking Guile. 'Tis well known how *Shimei* for reproaching, and reviling *David*, 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8. (though he was pardoned during his Reign, 2 *Sam.* xix. 23.) was nevertheleſs (according to the Directions he gave on his Death-bed, 1 *Kings* ii. 9.) put to Death by *Solomon* his Son, *v.* 44. 46. For all Men are not endued with the like Patience as *Peliſtarchus*, (*a*) who being often reviled by a notorious Railer, ſtill held his Peace; till at laſt being told that the ſame Perſon ſpake well of him, who had reproached him before; he only anſwered, "I will "lay my Life ſome body hath told him that I am dead, "for he can ſpeak well of no Man living."

VI. Beſides, ſuch ill Language is a grievous perverting the Deſign of Speech, which was given us to adviſe, help, and comfort; not to reproach, vex, and prejudice one another: And therefore *Quintilian* was of Opinion, (*b*) That it were much better to be born dumb, or to have been meer irrational Creatures, than to pervert ſuch excellent Gifts of Providence to one another's Hurt, or Deſtruction: For as ſuch Language is commonly a ſign of ill Will, and ill Manners, ſo likewiſe of a mean Spirit, and ill Breeding: It is the Part and Property of Ruſtick Clowns, and Perſons of the coarſeſt Education, and moſt ſervile Employments to beſpatter one another with foul Language: But ſuch as are wont to exerciſe their Thoughts about greater Matters, and are of a more ſublime, and noble Spirit, can never be provoked thus to treat even their greateſt Enemies. 'Tis well known what bitter Enmity there was between *Cæſar* and *Pompey*: *Pompey* was of ſuch an Heroick Spirit, that he could not admit of an equal; and *Cæſar* ſo ſtout, that he could endure no Superiour: Which was the Occaſion of the Civil War in *Rome*, in which, though *Cicero* inclined to *Pompey*'s ſide, yet (*c*) with Admiration he mentions the Greatneſs, Juſtice, and Wiſdom of *Cæſar*, in that he never ſpoke of his profeſs'd Enemy, but in the moſt honourable Terms.

(*a*) Britain's *Humane Prudence*, §. 9. p. 47. ed. 7. Lond. 1697.
(*b*) Quintil. l. 12. c. 1. *Inſtit. Orator.* p. 552. Genevæ. 1625.
(*c*) Cic. *Epiſt. tom.* 6. *Admirari ſoleo gravitatem*, &c.

VII. To

VII. To all which we may add, That the reproaching and reviling another is very wicked too: *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xv. 26. That *the Words of the pure are pleaſant Words*: but his Royal Father makes it part of the Character of the Wicked, and ſuch as work Iniquity, *to whet their Tongues like Swords, and bend their Bows, to ſhoot their Arrows, even bitter Words.* I am ſure it is no ways conſiſtent with the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, which enjoins us to curb, and reſtrain all Rancour and Malice, and doth all along preſcribe Meekneſs and Moderation: And therefore ſaith St. *Cyprian* (*a*) "Let not the Tongue that "doth confeſs, and acknowledge Chriſt be given to evil-"ſpeaking, Strife, or Reviling; neither let it be loud, "turbulent and clamorous." *Plutarch* tells, That *Memnon*, (*b*) *Darius*'s General, that led his Army againſt *Alexander* the Great, hearing one of his Soldiers railing againſt, and reviling *Alexander*, he ſtruck him with his Lance, ſaying, "I hire you to fight, not to ſpeak againſt "*Alexander*:" And then certainly to Chriſtians of any Good, or ingenuous Diſpoſitions, nothing can be more grating, or diſtaſtful than ſuch ſort of Language; becauſe they bear in mind that known Saying, (*c*) That he who ſpeaks ill, would do ill too if he had an Opportunity. And therefore ſuch evil Speakers are not unjuſtly baniſhed from all good Company here, but will alſo be excluded eternally from the Bleſſed Society in the Kingdom of God hereafter: *If any Man*, ſaith St. *Paul, that is called a Brother*, (*i. e.* who is in the Boſom of the Church, and a Chriſtian Profeſſor) *be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or contumelious Perſon, with ſuch a one you are not to eat, i. e.* you are not to keep Company, nor enter into any friendly Commerce with him, nor to have any intimate Familiarity, or common Converſation with him: And then, as to the World to come, we are aſſured in the very next Chapter by the ſame Apoſtle, *That neither Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God*

(*a*) *Lingua Chriſtum confeſſa*, &c. Cypr. de Unit. Eccleſ, (*b*) Plutarch. *Apoph.* p. 324, 325. *ut ſupra.* (*c*) *Maledicus à. maleſico non diſtat, niſi occaſione.* Quintil. (*ut ſupra*) l. 12. c. 9. p. 575.

1 Cor.

1 Cor. vi. 10. So that ſince Railing, and Reviling is ſo grievous, and pernicious a thing, as to debar Perſons (though otherwiſe Good, and praiſe Worthy) from the Kingdom of Heaven, St. *Cyprian* cannot be *(a)* blamed, (nor any other Meſſenger, and Miniſter of God) for ſo earneſtly beſeeching all to abſtain from the ſame.

VIII. Where alſo it may not be amiſs to take Notice, that our Saviour ſeems to imply that ſuch as uſe Contumelious, and contemptuous Expreſſions towards their Neighbour, ſhall be puniſhed according to the Malignity of ſuch Expreſſions, where he ſays, *Mat.* v. 22. *Whoſoever is angry with his Brother without a Cauſe, ſhall be in Danger of the Judgment, and whoſoever ſhall ſay unto his Brother* Racha, *ſhall be in Danger of the Council; but whoſoever ſhall ſay thou Fool, ſhall be in Danger of Hell fire*: Where Chriſt expreſſeth God's Judgments by things that were common, and well known to the Jews; and accommodates his Speech to the Form of the uſual Judicatures among them, and the Puniſhments inflicted by them: As their Judgments by their *Triumviri*, or Three Men deciding ſmall Matters; their Twenty-three Judges, determining greater Matters than the former; and their High-Court or Seventy, or Seventy-one (for beſides the Seventy, *Num.* xi. 16. there was one chief Judge, whom they called the Prince over the Seventy) which judged of the greateſt Matter of all: So our Saviour's Words may admit of this, or the like Paraphraſe: Whoſoever ſhall raſhly, or for any light Cauſe immoderately be angry with his Brother, ſhall be liable to that Puniſhment hereafter which is anſwerable to capital here, *viz.* the Loſs of eternal Life; and he that ſhall vilifie and deride his Brother, calling him vain, empty, deſpicable, or worthleſs Fellow, ſhall be liable to the great Court, or *Sanhedrim*, where, as the Puniſhment being ſtoning, was more ſevere than the former, ſo he ſhould proportionably in another World be condemn'd to a yet deeper Degree of Hell: But he that ſhould permit his Paſſion to break out into virulent Railing, ſhall be liable to that very great Degree of Puniſhment in another World, which is anſwerable to the Burning in the Valley of *Hinnom*, which was a Puniſhment far greater than the other two.

(a) Cypr. *Epiſt.* 7.

IX. For

IX. For the better underſtanding which, we muſt obſerve, that this *Gehenna*, or Valley of *Hinnom* (ſo called as ſome think from the Owner, or Poſſeſſor thereof, *Joſh.* xv. 8. *Jer.* xxxii. 35.) was once a pleaſant Valley near *Jeruſalem*, watered with the Brook *Kedron*, wherein was placed, in the Times of Idolatry, the Image, or Idol of *Baal*, or *Moloch*, all of Braſs, of a ſtately ſize, and hollow, the Head whereof was like that of a Calf, but the Body like the Body of a Man, with Arms ſpread abroad, as ready to receive the Children that were offered in Sacrifice to him, Fire for that Purpoſe being put into the hollow of the Idol to make it red hot, unto which the Children being compelled to go, were ſcalded to Death; and leſt their Shrieks, and Crys ſhould be heard they did beat upon Tabrets, and Drums whence the Place was called *Tophet*, Jer. vii. 32. Of this inhumane Idolatry God complains, *Jer.* xxxii. 35. ſaying, *They built the High-places of* Baal, *which are in the Valley of the Son of* Hinnom, *to cauſe their Sons, and their Daughters to paſs thorow the Fire unto Moloch, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my Mind, that they ſhould do this Abomination*: But afterwards it became a Contemptible Place, where was a Fire continually kept burning for the conſuming dead Carcaſes, and Filth brought out of *Jeruſalem*, for which Reaſon it was by a Metaphor put to ſignifie the Fire of Hell it ſelf, and thoſe eternal Puniſhments, which the Wicked after this Life are to expect. So that in ſhort, the Words of our Saviour ſignified thus much, Howſoever your Scribes and Phariſes teach you, that there is no Murther, but actual killing; yet I may ſay unto you, that as you have diverſe Puniſhments in your ſeveral Courts for different Offences, ſo likewiſe hath God diverſe Degrees of Puniſhments for the ſeveral Breaches of this Law: He that is raſhly angry ſhall not eſcape unpuniſhed; he that manifeſts his Anger by ſome expreſſive Geſture, or deriding Word, ſhall be puniſhed more than the former; but he that ſuffers it to vent it ſelf in Railing and Reviling, ſhall endure the moſt grievous Puniſhment of all, ſignified by that diſmal Burning in the forementioned Valley.

X. But here, if it be objected, that both in the old Teſtament and the new, we may meet with holy Perſons,

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in ſharp, and biting Terms, reproving not only the general Corruption of the Times, but alſo the Sins, and Miſdemeanours of ſome particular Perſons in them: as where the Prophets call the rebellious, and backſliding Jews, *A ſinfull Nation, a People laden with Iniquity, a Seed of evil Doers, and Children that are Corrupters; an Aſſembly of treacherous Men, and Adulterers,* &c. Iſa. i. 4. Jer. ix. 2, &c. where St. *John* Baptiſt calls the Scribes and Phariſees, *a Generation of Vipers,* Mat. iii. 7. and our bleſſed Saviour *an evil and adulterous Generation,* Mat. xvi. 4. Hypocrites, *Mat.* xxiii. 13. blind Guides, *Mat.* xv. 14. and the like: And where the Apoſtles call the Heretical, and Schiſmatical Teachers, *falſe Apoſtles, and deceitful Workers,* 2 Cor. xi. 13. *Dogs, and evil Workers,* Phil. iii. 2. *Men of corrupt Minds, and deſtitute of the Truth,* 1 Tim. vi. 5. *falſe Teachers, beguiling unſtable Souls,* 2 Pet. ii. 1, 14. *Murmurers, Complainers, walking after their own Luſts,* Jude, v. 16. and the like. To this it may be anſwered, that there were extraordinary Perſons, endued with ſpecial Meaſures of divine Grace, and empowered by eſpecial Commiſſion, and Authority from above to expreſs their holy Indignation againſt Sin in ſuch ſharp Language, to which only the Glory of God, the Good of Men, and the Neceſſity of the Caſe, or Thing, did unavoidably move them: For otherwiſe, and at other times, it is eaſie to be obſerved, that when their own particular Credit, or private Intereſt were only concerned, then, how grievouſly ſoever they were provoked and abuſed, they ſtill ſhew'd abundance of Patience, and Meekneſs, and carefully abſtained from all contumelious Expreſſions.

XI. Thus the beloved Son of God, and bleſſed Saviour of Mankind, (*leaving us an Example, that we ſhould follow his Steps,* 1 Pet. ii. 21.) *when he was reviled, reviled not again,* v. 23. *when he ſuffered, he threatned not: He was oppreſſed, and afflicted, yet he opened not his Mouth, being brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and like a Sheep that before her Shearers is dumb,* Iſa. liii. 7. Notwithſtanding all thoſe Injuries and Oppreſſions he unjuſtly ſuffer'd, he was ſtill, and ſilent, and behaved himſelf calmly, and quietly under them all, without either murmuring, or repining at God's diſpoſal of Things in that manner, or railing, and reviling at thoſe who dealt ſo deſpitefully with

with him: When he was adjudged to all the Contumelies that the moſt ſhameful Death could bring along with it; he went quietly to the Croſs, as a Sheep to the Slaughter Houſe, and when he was faſtned thereunto, he was ſo far from reviling his Crucifiers, or giving them ill Words, that he ſpent ſome of his laſt Breath in praying God to forgive them, *Luke* xxiii. 34. In like manner his Apoſtles (whoſe Examples alſo we are to follow, *Phil.* iii. 17.) though ſometimes they were conſtrained for the Reaſons above-mentioned to make uſe of harſh Words, when they were directed againſt the obſtinate Oppoſers, and malicious Perverters of the Truth; yet in what related only to themſelves, they ſtrictly abſtained from all manner of Reproach; being reviled, they did bleſs, and being perſecuted, they did patiently ſuffer the ſame, 1 *Cor.* iv. 12. they repay'd nothing to ſuch Contumelies, but friendly, and kind Uſage; and made no other return to ſuch Revilings, but that of their Prayers. So that whenſoever they uſed harſher Expreſſions, they muſt be ſuppoſed to have proceeded, not from private Paſſion, or Deſign, from intemperate Anger, or ill Will; but from a holy Zeal for God's Honour, and a charitable deſire to ſave Mens Souls: and therefore are not to be brought to palliate, juſtifie, or excuſe the unwarrantable Eruptions of inordinate Paſſions, which are no Ways Correſpondent with the Rules of Chriſtianity, nor the Practice of the firſt Propagators thereof; and therefore, as St. *Jerome* prayed God to deliver him, not from another's Tongue, ſo much as from his own (becauſe, ſaid he, another's Tongue hurts me not, 'tis mine own is my Enemy, and the Sword that kills my Soul, whilſt I think to hurt my Neighbours) ſo let us deſire Almighty God to unite us as much by Love, as he hath done by Faith; and touch our Tongues with a Coal from the Altar, that they may never be employ'd by us, to the reproaching, and reviling one another, but the praiſing of God's holy Name.

SECT. VII.

SECT. VII.

Of Execration, Curſing, or Imprecation.

I. *Execration, Curſing, or Imprecation,* is another Offence of Speech, becauſe, as *Aquinas* obſerves, (*a*) 'It is 'not lawful to wiſh Evil to any one: For the better underſtanding which, and removing ſuch Objections as will be otherwiſe apt to come in our way, we muſt know; Firſt, That there is a ſolemn *Curſing* or *Execration*, performed by Church-cenſure, which is a kind of revenging God's Quarrel, a Diſcipline which he himſelf hath committed into the Hands of ſome particular Perſons: Thus we read, *Deut.* xi. 26, 27, 28. That God himſelf commanded *Moſes*, ſaying, *Behold, I ſet before you this day a Bleſſing, and a Curſe: A Bleſſing if ye obey the Commandments of the Lord your God, and a Curſe if ye will not: And it ſhall come to paſs, when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the Land whither thou goeſt to poſſeſs it, that thou ſhalt put the Bleſſing upon Mount* Gerizim, *and the Curſe upon Mount* Ebal; which poſitive Divine Inſtitution is repeated, and more fully explained, *Deut.* xxvii. 11, 12. *&c.* where *Moſes* tells them what Tribes were to ſtand upon Mount *Gerizim*, and what upon Mount *Ebal*; what thoſe Curſes were the *Levites* were to pronounce, and what the People were to Anſwer: The manner ſeeming to be this; Six of the Tribes being placed on one Mount, and Six on the other; in a little Valley that was betwixt both, ſtood the Prieſts only, pronouncing, alternately, one while *Bleſſings upon the obſervers of the Law*, and another while denouncing *Curſes againſt the tranſgreſſors of it*; The Tribes upon *Gerizim* anſwering *Amen*, when a *Bleſſing* was pronounced, and when a *Curſe*, the Tribes on Mount *Ebal*. In Obedience to which Command, *Joſhua*, when come into the promiſed Land, did religiouſly obſerve, and perform all this, *Joſh.* viii. 33, 34. as *Joſephus* tells us, (*b*) The *Jews* always did in ſucceeding Ages.

(*a*) *Maledicere animo maledicendi, optando ſeu imprecando malum alicui, illicitum eſt.* Aquin. 2a. 2æ. qu. 76. art. 1. p. 140. col. 2. Paris 1622. (*b*) Joſeph. *Antiq.* l. 4. c. *ult.*

II. In doing which, though ſome Circumſtances were purely Ceremonial, 'Yet (as a Learned (*a*) Author hath 'obſerved) the main of the Duty, and the end for which 'it was preſcribed, being truly Moral, as tending to the 'Honour of God, in the Obſervation of his Laws, and 'promoting of real Holineſs, and publick acknowledging 'his Commands to be holy, juſt, and true: It cannot be 'thought unfit for the Times of the Goſpel, or unſuitable 'to our Chriſtian Worſhip; eſpecially when the Neceſſi-'ties of the Church do require that Sinners ſhould be 'brought to a right Senſe of their Sins, and the neceſſity 'of a ſpeedy and ſincere Repentance. And accordingly our Church (untill, which is much to be wiſhed, the Godly Diſcipline of the Primitive Church be reſtored again) hath ordered, at the beginning of *Lent*, to be read in the hearing of the People, certain general Sentences of Scripture, wherein are contained God's Curſes againſt impenitent Sinners, to the intent that ſuch, being admoniſhed of the great Indignation of God againſt them, and the deſperate Danger of continuing Impenitent, may the rather be moved to earneſt and true Repentance, and walk more warily in theſe dangerous Days, fleeing from ſuch Vices, for which they affirm with their own Mouths, (by anſwering *Amen*) the *Curſe of God to be due.*

III. But this pious and rational Office, as it hath been derided by ſome, ſo hath it been found fault with by others; chiefly for theſe Two Reaſons: Firſt, Becauſe it is ſaid, *Gal.* iii. 13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for us*, i. e. when there were no means in the Law to juſtifie any, but rather to bring Curſes on all, becauſe all had ſinned, Chriſt then was ſeaſonably pleaſed to interpoſe to make Satisfaction for Sin by taking upon himſelf, and bearing that Curſe, which belonged to us all, that we might be freed from the ſame: But then, this only belongs to true Penitents; for as to all others, the Curſe ſtands in force ſtill; there remains indeed, as the ſame Apoſtle affirms, *Rom.* viii. 1. *No Condemnation now to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit*; but this cannot be

(*a*) *Dr.* Comber *on the Commination*, P. IV. p. 230. *of his Companion to the Temple*, Lond. 1684. Fol.

applied

applied to ſuch Sinners, as are not yet ſo awakened from their Security, and ſo convinced of their Curſed State, as to be brought to Repentance, and Reformation of Life: And even for ſuch righteous Perſons as are thus redeemed, it cannot be amiſs for them to declare their Belief of the Truth, and certainty of theſe Curſes, and to acknowledge what their Sins in their own nature did deſerve; and to confeſs, that their Deliverance from the ſame was not becauſe they were not in force, but becauſe they were executed on our Bleſſed Redeemer, of whoſe great Obligations to whom ſuch Perſons may be hereby put in mind, as well as warned againſt a future Relapſe.

IV. The other Thing that hath been objected is, That the anſwering *Amen* to theſe Threatnings of God's Law, is a kind of curſing our ſelves, and conſequently not only ridiculous, but very wicked too: But in Anſwer to this, it may be ſufficient to ſay, That God himſelf commanded this to be done, *Deut.* xxvii. 15, *&c.* ſo that it can be no leſs than Blaſphemy to call ſo Divine an Inſtitution either fooliſh or wicked: Good there may be in following the Directions of the Church, but harm there can be none, if thoſe who make theſe Anſwers underſtand what they ſay; to which end, let them conſider that the Word *Amen* is not always, a Wiſh or Prayer; but oftentimes ſignifies no more than an aſſent to the Truth of that to which it is added, and thus it is uſed at the end of our Creed: And therefore they ſhew no leſs Ignorance than Impiety, who affirm this anſwering *Amen*, to be a wiſhing our ſelves accurſed. For the word *Amen*, is not only an Adverb or Particle of Wiſhing, at what time it is the ſame as, *So be it*, or *Let it be done*; and in this Senſe is uſed at the end of that Prayer our Saviour himſelf taught his Diſciples, *Mat.* vi. 13. as alſo in other Places of Scripture, *Jer.* xxviii. 6. *Rev.* xxii. 20. but it is likewiſe an Adverb of affirming, ſignifying the ſame as *Truly*, or *Verily*, confirming the Truth, and Certainty of that Thing or Matter, concerning which it is ſpoke: Thus the Son of God, as he is called *Amen*, Rev. iii. 14. or (as he calls himſelf, *Joh.* xiv. 6.) the *Truth*; ſo is the ſame Word frequently uſed by him by way of Aſſeveration, called therefore by (*a*) St. *Bernard*,

(*a*) *Verbum confirmationis.* Bern. *in illa verba, Ecce nos reliquimus omnia.*

The Word of Confirmation; thus for Inſtance, in delivering thoſe Words of our Saviour, *Verily I ſay unto you, there be ſome ſtanding here, which ſhall not taſte of Death, till they ſee the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom*; where for *Verily*, as the Evangeliſts St. *Matthew*, and St. *Mark* (*Mat.* xvi. 28. *Mark* ix. 1.) uſe the Word *Amen*; ſo doth St. *Luke*, expreſs the ſame in his Goſpel by the Word *Truly*, or *of a Truth*, Luke ix. 27. and the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, declaring the undoubted Truth of God's Promiſes, ſays, 2 *Cor.* i. 20. That *they are in Chriſt, Yea, and Amen, or Truth, and Aſſurance.* To which we may add, that for the greater Certainty of an Aſſertion, this Word is ſometimes repeated, as *Joh.* i. 52. *Amen, Amen,* or *Verily, Verily, I ſay unto you, hereafter ye ſhall ſee the Heaven open, and the Angels of God aſcending, and deſcending upon the Son of Man*: So that the repeating *Amen*, when we hear ſuch Sentences of Scripture read, may ſignifie the Teſtifying our firm Belief that theſe, as all other Places of Holy Writ, are infallibly true.

V. Again, the ſame Word is often uſed as a Note of Aſſent: Thus the Pſalmiſt, having pronounced *the Lord God of Iſrael bleſſed from everlaſting to everlaſting*, Pſal. cvi. 48. adds, *and let all the People* (teſtifie their Aſſent, by) ſaying *Amen*; and that they followed theſe Directions of his, appears from the Obſervation of that ſolemn Feſtival at the bringing the Ark of God to its Place, when at the end of the *Pſalm* of Thankſgiving, that was ſung by the Choir which *David* appointed, we are told, 1 *Chron.* xvi. 36. That *all the People* (teſtified their Conſent to all that had been ſaid, or ſung) by a hearty *Amen*: Thus alſo, when the ſame Prince, a little before his Death, commanded *Solomon to be anointed King of Benaia*, the Son of *Jehoiada*, who was to ſee it done, 1 *Kings* i. 36. anſwered the King, and ſaid *Amen*; ſignifying thereby his Approbation and Liking, and how earneſtly he deſired to have that Command fulfilled: And thus, when *Ezra* the Scribe read the Law unto the People, *all the People*, are ſaid to have *anſwered, Amen, Amen*, *Neh.* viii. 6. thereby not only teſtifying their Aſſent to what was read, but alſo, by redoubling the ſame Expreſſion, manifeſting their Heartineſs, Fervency,

vency, and Zeal; yea, (*a*) it was the common Practice of the *Jews* in their Synagogues to uſe the ſame; not only at their Prayers, but alſo at thoſe Sermons, and Expoſitions delivered by their Rabbins, or Doctors, to teſtifie that they believed, and aſſented to all that they had taught them: As at the receiving the *Euchariſt*, the Primitive Chriſtians, to teſtifie their Belief that it was truly the Body and Blood of Chriſt, ſpiritually conveyed unto them, and that they agreed and conſented to the whole Office, at the end of the ſame, made a ſolemn and general Acclamation (*b*) of *Amen*; to which Cuſtom of the Ancient, and (it ſeems) Apoſtolical Church, ſome will have thoſe words of St. *Paul* to refer, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 16. *When thou ſhalt bleſs with the Spirit, how ſhall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, ſay Amen, at the giving of thanks, if he underſtand not what thou ſayeſt*, i. e. how ſhall he thereby declare his Conſenting to ſuch Prayers, the meaning of which he does not underſtand? or expreſs his Deſire, that ſuch Petitions may be fulfilled, when he knows not what is ſpoken.

VI. So that the repeating *Amen*, after the pronouncing theſe *Curſes*, is not a wiſhing that the *Curſes* may fall upon our own Heads, but only the teſtifying our Conſent, with our own Mouths, that the *Curſe of God* is indeed due to ſuch Sins, as are there mentioned: And the Deſign of our doing ſo, is to make us ſhun and avoid ſuch Vices for the time to come; and earneſtly repent, if we have been guilty of them, for the time paſt; otherwiſe, we are in a State of Condemnation, whether we ſay *Amen*, or no: And, unleſs we thus judge our ſelves impartially, repent ſincerely, and ſpeedily amend our Ways, we can never hope, or expect to eſcape the Wrath to come. To conclude this Particular, though I place no Merit in the bare Prolation or Sound of the Word (as the *Jews* ſeem to do, who think the devout pronouncing of the ſame ſo effectual, as to haſten the Time of their Redemption, (*c*) and ſo

(*a*) *Judæi non ſolùm ad omnes preces, ſed ad omnes conciones, & Expoſitiones Allegoricas dicere debent Amen, ut per hoc ſignificent, quod credant id omne, quod Rabbini loquentur.* Buxtorf. *de Synag. Jud.* c. 1. p. 64. (*b*) Ἐπευφημία. *Juſt. Mart. Apol.* 2. (*c*) Buxtorf. *de Synagog. Jud.* c. 5. p. 181.

meritorious, as to eſtate them in the Kingdom (*a*) of Heaven) yet I am ſure there can be no hurt, in thus declaring our Aſſent, That God is true, and his Judgments, and Threatnings to be feared; the doing which can neither bring any Curſe upon thoſe that are truly Penitent, nor make thoſe that are not ſo more accurſed than they were before: So that the anſwering *Amen* here is no more than a Declaration, *That he whom God bleſſeth is bleſſed, and he whom God curſeth is curſed*, Numb. xxii. 6.

VII. But Secondly, there is an extraordinary and prophetical Curſing, proceeding from ſome more than ordinary Motion of God's Spirit; and ſuch was *Eliſha*'s Curſing the ill-bred Children, 2 *Kings* ii. 24. when they followed him, as he was quietly paſſing along in the High-ways, ſtill mocking, reviling, and abuſing him; at laſt, in deteſtation of ſuch Impiety, *he turned back, and looked on them, and curſed them in the Name of the Lord*, i. e. by Divine Inſtinct, and by Commiſſion from the Lord, not out of a revengeful Mind in his own Cauſe, but to the glory of God (whoſe ſacred Miniſtry was thus ſet at nought) he not only deſired Almighty God to execute a juſt Judgment upon them, but by a prophetical Spirit declared he would do ſo. By the ſame Spirit, St. *Paul* was moved, when he wiſheth that thoſe corrupt Seducers who did ſo much trouble, and diſquiet the Galatians, were cut off, *Gal.* v. 12. comparing thoſe who thus induſtriouſly corrupted the Doctrine of Chriſt, and ſo maliciouſly ſet themſelves againſt ſuch as preached the ſame *to rotten Members, that were to be cut off, leſt the Gangrene ſpread over the whole Body*: But this the Apoſtle did, not as they were his Enemies, but the Enemies of God, whoſe Cauſe it was he eſpouſed, more than his own: He knew they were incurable, and was not carried on by any Carnal Affection, to ſay what he did, but with a pure Zeal for God's Glory, being moved with the ſame Spirit by which he pen'd that Epiſtle. The like may be ſaid concerning ſeveral Paſſages in the Book of Pſalms, (as *Pſalm* cix. &c.) which ſeem rather to be took as prophetical Denunciations, for the Comfort of God's Church, with relation to her Enemies, than Curſes againſt any particular wicked Perſons: Beſides, ſince what thoſe holy Perſons did, or ſaid in this Caſe, was by an extraordinary Spirit,

(*a*) Buxtorf. *de Synag. Jud.* c 5. p. 181.

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we muſt not think it lawfull for us to imitate them in this Particular: For we have not the like Spirit to diſcern the Perſons of Men, what they are, as thoſe inſpired Perſons had: Neither can we ſay but that our Zeal for God's Glory is mixed with many corrupt Affections, and therefore more to be ſuſpected than theirs was. Many times thoſe who pretend to be moved only by a fervent Zeal of acting for God's Glory, and the good of Mankind, are prevailed upon only by the Reaſons of Fleſh and Blood, and give their Reins to their Paſſions ſo much, that at laſt their pretended Zeal ſeems at beſt to be no better than Inadvertency, and Raſhneſs, if not the Effect of Obſtinacy, or Pride, of Malice, or Revenge.

VIII. Laſtly, there is a prophane Curſing; when Perſons purely out of a malicious Mind (and ſometimes with great Solemnity too) curſe, or imprecate ſome Evil, or Miſchief to thoſe who have wronged, or offended them; boldly preſuming to take God's Work out of his Hands, to uſurp his Divine Prerogatives, preſcribe Rules, and Limits to infinite Wiſdom, and (as if they only were fit to govern the World) venture to judge, and paſs Sentence on Men before their time: Nay, upon every Offence, or ſlight Cauſe of Diſpleaſure are for laying the Pox, or the Plague upon their Brethren, or ſending them to the Devil, and curſing them, as they term it, to the Pit of Hell. Now this is what we are to avoid, and beware of; and were there no other Reaſon to deter from the ſame, it may be ſufficient that the Spirit of God hath made it one part of the wicked Man's Character, *That his Mouth is full of Curſing and Deceit*, Pſal. x. 7. or as St. *Paul* expreſſeth it, *of Curſing, and Bitterneſs*, Rom. iii. 14. 'Tis no Commendation for *Shelomith*'s Son that in a Bickering he had with one of his Neighbours, he blaſphemed the Name of the Lord, and curſed the Perſon with whom he quarreled, *Lev.* xxiv. 11. Nor is the Story of *Shimei*'s venting his Spleen, and Malice in curſing and reviling *David* in his Affliction, 2 *Sam.* xvi. 5. recorded for his Praiſe, or our Imitation.

IX. But if it be objected that St. *Peter*, who was a good Man, and one of the principal Apoſtles, was guilty of Curſing and Swearing, *Mat.* xxvi. 74. at what time he denied his Lord and Maſter; So let it likewiſe be remem-

bred, that as by God's expreſs Command the *Iſraelitiſh* Woman's Son was, for Curſing, ſtoned to Death, *Lev.* xxiv. 16, 23. and *Shimei* for the ſame Reaſon, at the Command of God's Anointed, was ſlain, 1 *Kings* ii. 44, 46. So this Bleſſed Apoſtle not only by his bitter weeping, acknowledged the Hainouſneſs of this Sin, and his Sorrow for it, *v.* 75. but ever after was careful, and endeavouring to waſh out this Stain, by a diligent, and painfull Attendance on his Miniſtry, and at laſt reſiſting unto Blood, *Heb.* xii. 4. Whether or no it be true, what ſome relate, (*a*) That ever after, when he heard the Cock Crow, he wept, I ſhall not ſtand to enquire; it being certain, That this Fall of his did ſufficiently work in him ſuch a godly Sorrow, as moved him to ſuch a Repentance, *as was not to be repented of*, 2 Cor. vii. 10. For as St. *Ambroſe* obſerves, (*b*) He truly bewaileth that which he hath done, who never does that afterward which he hath bewailed.

X. But alaſs! there be too too many, who are ſo deſtitute of the true Fear of God in their Hearts, of a due Senſe of the Hainouſneſs of this Sin, and of Kindneſs and Charity to others, yea to themſelves, that without any remorſe, or ſcruple at all they ſeem to take a Pride in this Language of Hell; frequently wiſhing God's Curſe to light not only upon their Enemies, but their Friends; and deſiring the Damnation not only of thoſe that quarrel, and contend with them, but even of their own Souls likewiſe. But, let me deſire ſuch Perſons to conſider firſt, with relation to others; That the Perſons they ſo liberally beſtow their Curſes upon, are either ſuch as live *righteouſly and godly in this preſent World*, Tit ii. 12. or ſuch as do not. As to the firſt of theſe, we know very well what Succeſs *Balaam*, and *Balak* had in their attempting to curſe *Iſrael*, the People of God, *Num.* xxii. &c. This *Balak*, King of the Moabites, hearing of the ſeveral Victories, and Conqueſts of the Iſraelites, and that they were come in vaſt Multitudes to the Borders of his own Dominions, was in a mighty Dread and Conſternation, and not knowing what to do ſent Meſſengers, with the Rewards of Divination in their Hands, to *Balaam*

(*a*) *Arſenius in vitis* PP. (*b*) *Ille verè plangit commiſſa, qui non committit plangenda.* Ambroſ.

the

the Sooth-ſayer, to perſwade him to come, and curſe the People of *Iſrael*; fanſying that thereby he ſhould be the better able to overcome them, and drive them out: But notwithſtanding all their Altars and Sacrifices, there was no Inchantment to be found againſt *Jacob*, nor any Divination againſt *Iſrael*: Yea, ſo far from that, that *Balaam*, whether he would or no, was forced to pronounce them Bleſſed; their Enemies were ſubdued; and *Balaam* himſelf was ſlain with the Sword, among the reſt, that were ſlain by them, *Num.* xxxi. 8. *Joſh.* xiii. 22.

XI. Now, this very Propenſion, and Inclination of Mind in *Balaam* to curſe the Iſraelites, St. *Jude*, *v.* 11. calls not a commendable Quality, but an Errour; and St. *Peter*, 2 Epiſt. ii. 15, 16. *a going aſtray, an Iniquity, and a Madneſs*; And a Madneſs indeed it muſt to be accounted for any, by curſing thoſe whom God loves, to bring down his Judgments upon their own Heads: For ſo ſaith God to *Abraham*, Gen. xii. 3. *I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and curſe him that curſeth thee*; and, *Num.* xxiv. 9. ſpeaking of his choſen People, he ſaith, *Bleſſed is he that bleſſeth thee, and curſed is he, that curſeth thee*: So that we ſee, God puniſheth this Sin in its kind, and declares that thoſe that curſe others, ſhall be curſed of him themſelves: according to the Words of the Pſalmiſt, who complaining of the wicked Man, ſaith, *Pſal.* cix. 17, 18. *His Delight was in Curſing, and it ſhall happen unto him, he loved not bleſſing, therefore ſhall it be far from him: he clothed himſelf with Curſing, like as with a Garment, and it ſhall come into his Bowels like Water, and like Oil into his Bones.* Now, what a dreadfull Thing it is for the Curſe of the Lord, to come into the Houſe of ſuch wicked Perſons, *Prov.* iii. 33. appears from hence; that their very Bleſſings will be curſed, *Mal.* ii. 2. even all the good Things pertaining to this Life, which God hath been pleaſed to beſtow upon them: *Curſed ſhall they be in the City, and in the Field; curſed ſhall be their Basket and their Store; curſed ſhall be the Fruit of their Body, and the Fruit of their Land, the increaſe of their Kine, and their Flocks of Sheep; curſed ſhall they be, when they come in, and when they go out*: and in all that they ſet their Hands unto, *Deut.* xxviii. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

XII. But

XII. But, if ſuch Perſons reply, that thoſe whom they curſe, are not ſuch good, and religious People, but wicked and ungodly Folk, that have done them a great deal of Injury, and Wrong, and are Enemies to God, as well as to themſelves: Let me deſire them to conſider, how barbarous, and inhumane it is to curſe the Wicked, who are haſtening (poor Souls!) to greater Torments than they can wiſh them. Charity methinks ſhould rather oblige them to pity, and put up Prayers rather than Imprecations in their behalf; or ſuppoſe (which is the moſt that can be ſaid) that they have done 'em ſome Injury (for many times they curſe thoſe that never did) let them ſeriouſly conſider that Injunction of our Lord, *Mat.* v. 44. *Love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you*: and a ſtrong Inducement ſo to do is there added, *v.* 45. *That ye may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven, who maketh his Sun to riſe on the Evil, and on the Good, and ſendeth Rain on the Juſt, and on the unjuſt*; where our Saviour commands us, *not to render Evil for Evil* (as St. *Paul* expreſſeth it, 2 *Theſ.* v. 15.) *but to overcome Evil with Good*, *Rom.* xii. 21. and to let our Kindneſſes be as diffuſive as the Bleſſings of Heaven: making no other Return to the moſt bitter Reproaches, and injurious Behaviour of our greateſt Enemies, than obliging, bleſſing and praying for them; and expreſſing our hearty Love and Charity, in good Words, and Wiſhes to them, who evidently make it appear they wiſh us ill; that ſo by imitating *the God of Love*, 1 Joh. iv. 8. 16. *and Father of Mercies*, 2 Cor. i. 3. *and by walking in Love as Chriſt alſo hath loved us*, Eph. v. 1, 2. We may approve our ſelves, as dear Children, to be Followers of him, who doth not confine his Bleſſings to good Men alone, but extends them to the moſt injurious Provokers, as well as the pious Adorers of his Divine Majeſty; and cauſeth his Sun to give light, and warmth to both; and ſends both the former and the latter Rain to cool and refreſh the Fields, and maketh graſs to grow upon the Mountains belonging as well to one as the other, *Deut.* xi. 14.

XIII. Thus Chriſt did not curſe, but pray for his Crucifiers, *Luke* xxiii. 34. as St. *Stephen* did for thoſe who ſtoned him to Death, *Act.* vii. 60. and St. *Paul* for *Agrippa*, and

and thoſe Enemies of his that brought him before him, *Acts* xxvi. 29. yea, he tells us, 1 *Cor.* iv. 12, 13. It was his conſtant practice to bleſs; though he was defamed, and reviled, and made as the Filth of the World, and Offſcouring of all Things, and that we might follow his Example, he exhorts us to bleſs, even our Perſecutors, to bleſs, and not to curſe, *Rom.* xii. 14. and whoſoever dare go beyond the Limits of this Rule, may very well be rebuked in our Saviour's Words, *Luke* ix. 55. *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of*: For indeed, as Saint *James* obſerves, *Jam.* iii. 9, 10. *It ought not to be, that out of the ſame Mouth ſhould proceed Bleſſing, and Curſing*: and that with the ſame Tongue Men ſhould acknowledge, and bleſs him, who is both our God, and our Father; and revile, and curſe our Chriſtian Brethren, who being made after his Similitude, ought even for that very Image of God, which they bear upon them, to be uſed with all imaginable Kindneſs; and are not, though they be our Enemies, to be proſecuted with Curſes.

XIV. But ſo common is this Practice grown, that Men too too often, not only upon every ſmall Provocation, or Offence, will call for Vengeance upon others; but many times, without any Provocation at all; not in Anger or Paſſion, but in a kind of familiar and jocular Way, will, with the ſame Breath curſe their greateſt Friends, and neareſt Relations, and ſwear at the ſame time how vehemently they love 'em: nay, they will not ſo much as ſpare themſelves, but, upon every frivolous occaſion, and to confirm every inconſiderable Truth (which is no great Matter perhaps whether it be believed, or no) are apt to wiſh they may never ſtir more, or never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, *&c.* if the Thing be not ſo and ſo. But here, not to mention how liable all Perſons are to Miſtakes, how frail their Memory is, and how deceitful their Senſes; this muſt needs be acknowledged to be true, that they can never ſtand in ſuch awe of God as they ought, who dare be ſo bold as thus to invocate his Judgments, and challenge his Juſtice; eſpecially conſidering how often he takes them at their Words: For not to mention thoſe Threats in holy Writ, where it is ſaid, *Ex.* xxi. 17. *Lev.* xx. 9. *He that curſeth his Father, or his Mother, ſhall ſurely be put to death: Whoſo curſeth his Father,*

or

or *his Mother, his Lamp ſhall be put out in obſcure Darkneſs,* Prov. xx. 20, &c. This is moſt certain, "That the Ears "of God, as Biſhop *Hall* hath obſerved, (*a*) are not only "open to the Prayers of Faith, but to the Imprecations of "Infidelity; and therefore it is dangerous wiſhing Evil "to our ſelves, or ours, becauſe it is but juſt with God to "take us at our Word, and to effect that which our Lips "ſpeak againſt our Heart.

XV. For, though we might produce ſeveral Inſtances of the ſad and diſmal Effects of ſuch haſty Imprecations, yet I ſhall confine my ſelf only to that of the Jews, when they were ſo earneſt for having Chriſt crucified, and ſeeing *Pilate* endeavouring, by waſhing his Hands, to clear himſelf from the Blood of ſo innocent a Perſon, they cried, ſaying, *His Blood be on us, and on our Children,* Mat. xxvii. 25. *i. e.* Whatſoever Guilt there is in putting him to Death, let it lie upon us, and our Poſterity, and if there be any Puniſhment due for the ſame, we deſire that we, and our Children may bear the Burthen of it. And how ſpeedily, the Fruit of this raſh and wicked Imprecation came upon them, and how heavily with all fullneſs of Terror, it fell on them and their Children the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtories do abundantly ſhew: For in a ſhort time after their Cities were laid waſt, their Temple burnt to Aſhes, and their Country quite diſpeopled by the Romans, and the Calamities they underwent exceed both Example, and Deſcription; and ever ſince, they have been contemned, and made a proverbial Scoff among all Nations, and live as Aliens, even in their own Country: They are ſcatter'd, and diſpers'd up and down over the Face of the whole Earth, and hated by thoſe amongſt whom they dwell, and not permitted to poſſeſs a Foot of Land which they can call their own; being ſuffered only as neceſſary Evils, the Government in all Places where they are allowed to live, laying upon them in any preſſing Neceſſities of State, a far greater Impoſition, than upon the Natives; and though here in *England* they came in with the mix'd Company the Conqueror brought along with him, and afterwards planted themſelves in conſide-

(*a*) Bp. Hall's *Contemplations on the Bible,* vol. 2. l. 7. p. 930. Lond. 1625. Fol.

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rable Numbers; yet they were not allowed (*a*) to poſſeſs any more Land, than a piece of Ground near *London* (where was their principal Reſidence) for their burying Place, called at that time the *Jews Garden*; and were alſo obliged, (that they might the better be known) to wear upon their upper Garments a particular Badge; but even hence too, about the Year 1290 they were all baniſhed, and none of them (to ſpeak of) permitted to reſide in *England* ever after, till the pretended Reformation, of that grand Hypocrite, and perfidious Uſurper *Cromwell*, who was pleaſed (out of the great Concern he had for true Piety, and the Chriſtian Profeſſion) to grant them the Liberty not only of Reſidence in *England*, but of a Synagogue too in the Metropolis thereof.

XVI. To all which we may add, how ſuch Perſons run the Hazard of being for ever ſhut out of the Kingdom of Heaven, for the Langunge of Hell can never fit us to be Citizens of the New *Jeruſalem* (*where ſhall be no more Curſe*, Rev. xxii. 3.) but mark us out for the Inhabitants of the Land of Darkneſs; and render us liable to be rejected with that unprofitable Ground the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, *Heb.* vi. 8. *which bearing nothing but Thorns, and Briars, is nigh unto Curſing, whoſe End is to be burned.* Do thou therefore, Bleſſed Lord, who bleſſeſt us daily, communicate to us of thy gracious Nature, that we may bleſs alſo, and not curſe; that ſo by imitating thee, we may gain thy Favour, and through the Merits of thy only Son be admitted into the Manſions of everlaſting Bliſs.

SECT. VIII.

Of Brawling, Quarrelling, or Wrangling.

I. NEar of kin to this laſt is the next Offence of Speech, that we ſhall take notice of, *i. e.* Brawling, or Quarrelling, Strife, Debate, or Wrangling; which Saint *Paul* makes ſo unbecoming a Servant of the Lord, 2 *Tim.* ii. 24. who ought not to be of a contentious Diſpoſition; but mild, quiet, and peaceable towards all Men. For Meekneſs, Humility, and Patience are none of the leaſt

(*a*) *Mercurius Reformatus*, vol. 1. n. 27. Nov. 13. 1689.

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Accompliſhments of a true Chriſtian, who ought to be affable, courteous, and gentle; and reduce his Paſſions to ſuch a Temper and Calmneſs, that they may neither prove Uneaſy at home, nor Miſchievous abroad: by either making Uproars within to diſturb himſelf, or without to the diſquieting of his Neighbour. Hence the Apoſtle exhorts us, *Eph.* iv. 31, 32. To *let all Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and evil-ſpeaking to be put away from us, with all Malice, and to be kind one to another, and tender hearted*: Not to walk in Strife, and Envying, *Rom.* xiii. 13. nor *to let any thing be done through Strife, or Vain-glory*, Phil. ii. 3. but *all things without Murmurings, and Diſputings*, v. 14. Yea, he will have us, *to be patient toward all Men*, 1 Theſ. v. 14. and that, as it ſeems, in ſpite of all Provocation to the contrary; for ſo run the Words following, *v.* 15. *See that none render Evil for Evil unto any Man*: or as St. *Peter* adds, 1 *Pet.* iii. 9. *railing for railing*; which indeed is the moſt prudent and moſt likely way to put an end to the ſame. For according to the old Proverb, *(a)* The more Men quarrel, the more they are like to do ſo; or according to *Solomon*'s Proverb, *Prov.* xxvi. 21. *As Coals are to burning Coals, and Wood to Fire, ſo is a contentious Man to kindle Strife*; and again, *Prov.* xvii. 14. *The beginning of Strife is as one letteth out Water, therefore leave of Contention before it be medled with*, i. e. He that raiſeth Strife, or begins a Quarrel, knows not how to put a ſtop to it, any more than he, that opens a Breach to let out Waters to drown a Country, and therefore the beſt way is not to begin at all: For as the greateſt Rivers, and moſt violent Streams owe their firſt riſe to ſmaller Springs, ſo great Quarrels begin at firſt, with Words that are leſs vehement.

II. The wiſe Son of *Sirach* therefore doth adviſe, Not to ſtrive with a Man *(b)* that is full of Tongue, nor *to heap Wood upon the Fire*, Eccl. viii. 3. thus holy *David*, Pſal. cix. 2, 3, 4. when his Enemies compaſſed him about with Words of hatred, and ſpoke againſt him with lying Tongues; when the Mouth of the Wicked and Deceitful were opened upon him, he returned them not like for

(a) Δίκη νίκην ἔτικτε, *Lis litem parit.* *(b)* *Contra verboſos noli contendere verbis.* Cato.

like,

like, but gave himſelf unto Prayer; and what mild Anſwers were returned by *Hannah* to the provoking Language of *Eli*, 1 Sam. i. 10. and by our Bleſſed Saviour to the Jews, *John* viii. 48, 49. when by way of Reproach they affix'd on him the odious Title of *Samaritane*, and told him he had a Devil, the inſpired Pen-men do inform us: Yea, the Angels of Light, when upon any Occaſion they wage a Diſpute, even with the Rulers of Darkneſs, or implead them before God, bring no railing Accuſation againſt them, 2 *Pet.* ii. 11. and *Michael* the Arch-Angel, *Jude v.* 9. or chief of the good Angels, *Dan.* x. 13. in a Controverſy he had with the Prince of the Evil-Angels, about the Body of *Moſes*, durſt not bring againſt him a railing Accuſation, but ſaid *The Lord rebuke thee.* Where by the Body of *Moſes* ſome will have to be meant the re-edifying of the Temple, and the reſtoring of the Service of God among the Jews at *Jeruſalem*, Zach. iii. 1, 2. which may as fitly be ſtiled the Body of *Moſes*, in the ſame manner as the Chriſtian Church, or aſſembling of Chriſtians for the Service of Chriſt, is called *the Body of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. xii. 20, 25, 27. Eph. i. 23. Col. 1. 18, *&c.* Others again take the Words literally, as if where God is ſaid, to have buried the Body of *Moſes* ſo ſecretly, as that no Man could know where his Grave was, *Deut.* xxxiv. 6. (leſt the Iſraelites ſhould have made it an Occaſion of Idolatry, or carry it with them, as they did *Joſeph*'s Bones (*Ex.* xiii. 19. *Joſh.* xxiv. 32.) into the Land of *Canaan*, into which God had ſaid he ſhould not enter, *Deut.* xxxiv. 4.) he employed the Arch-Angel *Michael* to do it; in doing which Satan reſiſted him, that ſo the People might know where it was, and worſhip it in after-times; or that *Moſes* might not be ſo honourably buried; or that his Body might lie above Ground, out of the Land of *Canaan*, to be abuſed by the Enemies of God's People: However it was, 'tis certain that during the Contention, the Angel, though never ſo much provoked, gave him no reproachful Words, but only deſired the Lord to ſtop his foul Mouth, and put him to Silence, in a Calm, *The Lord rebuke thee.*

III. *Homer*, deſigning to repreſent *Therſites*, as the moſt baſe, and raſcally Fellow that went to the Siege of *Troy*, makes him all along to be a brawling Perſon, ſawcy, and

of

of a foul Tongue; which, that they are no commendable Qualities, appears both from the Cauſes, and Effects, of ſuch Wrangling, and Brawling: For as to the firſt of theſe, Frowardneſs or Moroſeneſs ſeems by *Solomon* to be accounted one Cauſe thereof, where he ſays, *Prov.* xvi. 28. *A froward Man ſoweth Strife*; or as he words it, *Prov.* xxvi. 21. *As Coals are to burning Coals, and Wood to Fire, ſo is a contentious Man to kindle Strife.* Now ſince the ſame wiſe Prince makes it one part of the Character of a naughty, and wicked Perſon, That *he walketh with a froward Mouth*: that *Frowardneſs is in his Heart*, that *he ſoweth Diſcord, and deviſeth Miſchief continually*, Prov. vi. 12, 14. x. 32. and is therefore not unjuſtly ſaid to be *an Abomination unto the Lord*, Prov. iii. 32. viii. 13. xi. 20. ſince the Royal Pſalmiſt ſaid That *a froward Heart ſhould therefore depart from him*, Pſal. ci. 4. and his wiſe Succeſſor for the ſame Reaſon would have us put far away *a froward Mouth and perverſe Lips*, Prov. iv. 24. That certainly can never be eſteemed praiſe-worthy, which proceeds from ſo bad a Root; nor very deſirable neither, if we conſider how he adds, *Prov.* x. 31. *that a froward Tongue ſhall be cut out*; and that he who hath a froward Heart ſhall find no good, and he that hath a perverſe Tongue ſhall fall into Miſchief.

IV. Again, Anger, or Wrath is another Source from whence thoſe bitter Streams do flow; and therefore that wiſe Prince, as he tells us, *Prov.* xv. 1. That *grievous Words ſtir up Anger*: ſo likewiſe that Anger ſtirs up grievous Words; for ſo ſaith he, *Prov.* xxix. 22. *An angry Man ſtirreth up Strife*; and again, *Prov.* xv. 18. *A wrathfull Man ſtirreth up Strife, but he that is ſlow to Anger appeaſeth Strife*: yea, ſurely ſaith *Agur*, Prov. xxx. 33. *As the churning of Milk bringeth forth Butter, and the wringing of the Noſe bringeth forth Blood, ſo the forcing of Wrath, bringeth forth Strife*: For *Wrath is cruel, and Anger outragious*, Prov. xxvii. 4. And he that is overcome with this violent Paſſion, and not only threatens (*a*) his Enemy, but alſo, to uſe *Job*'s Expreſſions, *ſharpneth his Eyes upon him, gnaſheth upon him with his Teeth, and ſometimes in his Wrath teareth him that hates him*, Job xvi. 9. All which muſt

(*a*) *Ingentes parturit ira minas.* Ov. *Epiſt.* 12.

needs

needs be expected to be attended with bitter Words, and provoking Language. For Anger, according to *Cicero*, (*a*) is properly a deſire of taking Revenge upon thoſe by whom we conceive our ſelves wrong'd: Now though it be natural to Men, to be angry, yet this ought to be a tranſient Paſſion, not permanent: And as Almighty God is ſaid to be gracious, and ſlow to Anger, *Pſal.* ciii. 8. cxlv. 8. and when he is incenſed, his Anger is ſaid to endure but for a Moment, *Pſal.* xxx. 5. ſo ought we too to be ſlow to Wrath, *Jam.* i. 19. and not ſoon angry, *Tit.* i. 7. Or if at any time we be ſuddenly ſurprized with any Commotion of Mind for any Injury or Wrong, yet we muſt make haſt to ſubdue the ſame, and not let the Sun go down upon our Wrath, *Eph.* iv. 26.

V. Now, becauſe from nothing more perhaps, than this unruly Paſſion, doth Brawling or Quarreling proceed, it may perhaps not be amiſs, for the better avoiding one as well as the other, to conſider, that the abſtaining from the ſame is an evident Sign of Goodneſs, and of Wiſdom. As to the firſt of theſe *Claudian* tells us, "That he is moſt "like the Divine (*b*) Being, that is moved more by Rea- "ſon than by Anger (for Rage is an Enemy to all Reaſon): However, I am ſure St. *James* tells us, *Jam.* i. 20. That the inconſiderate and immoderate *Wrath of Man, worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God*; and St. *Paul* ſeems to inſinuate, *Eph.* iv. 27. That we cannot entertain it without giving Place to the Devil: Hence a furious Man is ſaid to abound in Tranſgreſſion, *Prov.* xxix. 22. whilſt in the mean time, as the Storms, and Tempeſts, though formed below, make a great Noiſe, and ſometimes do a great deal of Miſchief, whilſt all above is quiet, and ſerene; ſo the good Man, whoſe Converſation is in Heaven, *Phil.* iii. 20. and who chiefly ſeeks, and ſets his Mind on thoſe Things which are above, *Col.* iii. 1. eaſily maſters all Provocations, and will not ſuffer himſelf to be tranſported with tempeſtuous Wrath.

VI. No, nor the wiſe Man neither; for *Cicero* affirms, (*c*) "That a wiſe Man is never angry;" and a greater

(*a*) *Ulciſcendi libido.* Cic. Tuſc. l. 3. p. 83. Lond 1599.
(*b*) *Diis proximus ille eſt, Quem ratio, non ira movet.* Claudian.
(*c*) *Sapiens nunquam iraſcitur,* Cic. Tuſc. qu. p. 87. Lon. 1599.

than *Cicero*, hath told us, *Prov.* xviii. 6. That *a Fool's Lips enter into Contention; whilſt the Diſcretion of a Man deferreth his Anger*, Prov. xix. 11. and *Prov.* xiv. 29. That *he that is ſlow to Wrath is of great Underſtanding, but he that is haſty of Spirit exalteth Folly.* And indeed, to overcome Wrath, and Paſſion with the Spirit of Meekneſs, and Patience is an Argument of true Wiſdom; whence it is called *A Fool's Wrath*, Prov. xii. 16. and *Prov.* xiv. 16. The Fool is ſaid to *rage, and be confident*; and *he that is ſoon angry to deal fooliſhly*, v. 17. and therefore the ſame wiſe Prince gives this Advice, *Eccleſ.* vii. 9. *Be not haſty in thy Spirit to be angry, for anger reſteth in the Boſom of Fools.* A wiſe Man uſeth Anger as Phyſick, in its proper time; but a Fool, as his conſtant Diet; he is preſently provoked, and inconſiderately vents his Paſſion, as we ſay, without Fear or Wit: Hence the Philoſopher compares it to a Dog, that barks at a Man, before he obſerve whether it be a Maſter, or a Stranger; or to a haſty Meſſenger, that runs away without his Errand; and therefore as he is not like to do his Meſſage right, ſo *Tully* (*a*) thought it impoſſible for an angry Man to do any thing as he ſhould do: For Paſſion will not ſuffer him to ſee Things, as really they are; nor be wrought upon by any Arguments, though never ſo convincing. For Man is not like Iron, to be wrought upon whilſt hot: He being then as it were, beſides himſelf; he is then, as the Poet expreſſeth it, (*b*) ſcarce in his right Wits: Whence *Horace* (*c*) calls ſuch outragious Anger, a ſhorter Madneſs: Neither indeed doth there ſeem to be any Difference between them, unleſs in Continuance, as will appear by taking a view of ſuch as are tranſported with Rage.

VII. The Royal Pſalmiſt joins the Peoples raging and imagining a vain Thing together, *Pſal.* ii. 1. but as *Philo* obſerves, (*d*) The confuſed Diſturbance of the Mind is not all, the ſame Diſcompoſedneſs is perceived all over the Body, from the ſtammering of their Tongues, their wild Looks, and diſtracted Speeches; (*e*) from their Hair

(*a*) *Cum ira nihil rectè fieri. Nihil conſideratè poteſt.* Cic. Offic. l. 1. pag. 57. Lond. 1629. (*b*) *Vix compos animi.* Terent. (*c*) *Ira furor brevis eſt.* Horat. *Epiſt.* l. 1. *Epiſt.* 2. ad Lollium. (*d*) Philo *Leg. alleg.* l. 2. (*e*) *Ora tument irâ*, &c. Ov. l. 3. de Art. amandi.

ſtanding

ſtanding up on end, their ſwell'd, and diſtorted Faces, and the unuſual ſometimes Paleneſs, and ſometimes redneſs of the ſame: From their ſparkling Eyes (*a*), and boiling Blood; from their ſtamping with their Feet, the ſhaking of their Hands, and Lips, and the unſteady Motions and Poſtures of their whole Bodies. So that *Plato* (*b*) is ſaid to have adviſed angry Men, when they are in the height of their Rage, to run preſently to the Looking-glaſs, that ſo by the ſight of their own Deformity (which will render them even frightful to themſelves) they might be the better prevailed upon to avoid the ſame, which utterly unman's 'em, and puts them upon ſaying, and doing things that can neither be remembred by themſelves, nor juſtified by others. In a word, ſome have compared Perſons (all whoſe Thoughts are thus bound up in Choler) to a tiled Houſe on fire, at what time there is no coming near to quench it; for they ſpare neither Friend nor Foe, but tear all to pieces; and therefore it is no wonder that *Solomon* adviſeth *to make no Friendſhip with an angry Man, and with a furious Man not to go,* Prov. xxii. 24. and affirms, *Prov.* xxi. 19. That *it is better to dwell in the deſart Wilderneſs, than with a contentious, and an angry Woman.*

VIII. 'Tis reported of *Cotys,* (*c*) That when a Stranger brought him ſome brittle Earthen-Veſſels, which were curiouſly wrought, he broke them all in pieces, leſt others breaking them, ſhould provoke him to Anger, to which he was much inclined: He wiſely conſidered, That whoſoever gives way to Anger is neither Maſter of himſelf, nor his Actions; and conſequently very liable both to ſpeak, and do what is not fitting; as the Pſalmiſt ſeems to imply, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 8. ſaying, *Ceaſe from Anger, and forſake Wrath, fret not thy ſelf, elſe ſhalt thou be moved to do Evil:* and to ſpeak Evil too, as appears from the Apoſtle's joining *Bitterneſs and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking* together, *Eph.* iv. 31. All which as he exhorts the Epheſians there to put away from them; as likewiſe the Coloſſians, ch. iii. v. 8. where he alſo joins Anger,

(*a*) *Irâ ſcintillant oculi,* &c. Perſ. Sat. 3. in fine. (*b*) Stanley's *Hiſt. of Philoſophy.* P. V. p. 172. Lond. 1687. (*c*) Plutarch. *Apoph.* p. 325. Franc. 1603.

and Wrath, and Malice, and Blaſphemy, or Evil-ſpeaking together; ſo in like manner doth St. *James* exhort every Perſon to be *ſlow to ſpeak*, Jam. i. 19. and *ſlow to Wrath: leſt the Wrath of God abide on him*, Prov. xix. 19. for *Solomon* ſays, *A Man of great Wrath ſhall ſuffer Puniſhment*: And ſince for theſe, and ſuch like Things ſake the *Wrath of God cometh on the Children of Diſobedience*, Col. iii. 6. it behoves all rather to imitate, than deſpiſe the *Riches of his Goodneſs, Forbearance, and Long-ſuffering*, Rom. ii. 4, 5. leſt otherwiſe they treaſure up unto themſelves *Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God.*

IX. Another Cauſe of ſuch Wrangling, and Quarreling is Hatred: for ſo ſaith the wiſe Man, *Prov.* x. 12. *Hatred ſtirreth up Strife*, i. e. by diſcovering, and upbraiding Men with their Faults, when Love by covering, and concealing the ſame, extinguiſheth all ſuch Animoſities, if not wholly ſuppreſſeth the ſame; for ſo it immediately follows, in the very ſame Verſe, *but Love covereth all Sins.* Nor ought it to ſeem ſtrange, that Hatred ſhould promote Quarrelings, and Debates, if that old Saying be true, *(a)* That a Man that hates another, wiſheth his Deſtruction: Whence perhaps it was that among the Egyptians, a Fiſh was made the Hieroglyphick of Hatred, becauſe of all Creatures they do moſt devour one another; however, this is certain, That it is the moſt natural Reſult of Hatred to ſhew ſome Diſpleaſure; and, where the Power is equal to the Will, to endeavour the manifeſting the ſame by ſome deſtructive Tokens of Diſlike; or at leaſt, when it cannot arrive ſo far as that, by contentious Language and wrangling Debates. This is too too evident even with relation to that which ought to be the very Bond of Peace, *Eph.* iv. 3. and cement of Love and Charity, and which is, in it ſelf, the moſt uniting Thing in the World, I mean Religion: No hatred burning ſo furiouſly as that, *(b)* which is firſt kindled from the Coals of the Altar; and none expreſſing it ſelf in more bitter Terms: For what Perſonal Quarrels, and petty Animoſities, what unchari-

(a) Quem quiſque odit, periiſſe expetit. Ennius. *(b) Pervicaciſſima ſunt odia, quæ ex diverſarum Religionum litibus fervent.* Joh. Barclaii *Argenis.* l. 2. p. 97. Auguſt 1622.

table

table Names, and unchriſtian Wranglings have been raiſed, and without any Fruit, Advantage, or Satisfaction at all carried on upon that Account? Lord, do thou, (for thou only canſt do it) put an end to the ſame; that there may be Peace on Earth, and good Will amongſt all the Inhabitants thereof, *Luke* ii. 14. let us all at laſt be at Peace among our ſelves, 1 *Theſſ.* v. 13. and have Peace one with another, *Mark* ix. 50. that ſo thou who art the God of Love, and Peace, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 11. ſeeing us all to be of one Mind, may'ſt delight to dwell among us, and to do us good,

X. But beſides theſe already mentioned, there is one Cauſe more of ſuch indecent Quarrels, and that is Pride; for ſo likewiſe *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xiii. 10. *Only by Pride cometh Contention,* i. e. the main Cauſe of ſuch Contentions is generally Pride; which will not ſuffer Men to hearken to good Counſel, which if they did, they would act more prudently than they do, and *leave off Contention before it be medled with,* Prov. xvii. 14. and therefore it preſently follows, *Prov.* xiii. 10. but *with the well adviſed is Wiſdom*; agreeable to which are the Words of Saint *Jam.* iii. 13. *Who is a wiſe Man, and endued with Knowledge? let him ſhew out of a good Converſation his Works with meekneſs of Wiſdom.* Pride is a very unſociable Vice, and ſeldom reſts in the Breaſts of ſuch as are of a peaceable Temper; and hath two ill Qualities attending it, that cannot but cauſe a great deal of Strife, and Quarreling. For firſt, it is very (*a*) ſuſpicious, and miſtruſtful, and very apt to wreſt, and miſconſtrue whatever is ſaid, or done, putting the worſt Interpretations upon the ſame, and over-rating every little Affront, or Neglect: And then ſecondly, it is ſo unreaſonably partial, as to ſuffer thoſe who are poſſeſt with it, to diſcern in themſelves nothing but Matter of Admiration, in others nothing but Contempt: And this mean Opinion they have of their Neighbour's Excellencies, whilſt they ſo highly over-value their own, makes them not only take delight in ſeeing others beneath 'em, but fanſie alſo, 'tis their proper Place; and

(*a*) *Suſpicax eſt ſuperbia, & quæ ſimpliciter ſunt dicta, vel facta iniquiſſimis interpretationibus detorquet,* Lud. Viv. l. 3. de vit. & anim. p. 592. tom. 2. oper. Baſil. 1555.

are therefore uneaſy till they fix 'em there, which often cauſes great Conteſts, and Diſputes. Biſhop *Hall* was wont to ſay, *(a)* There were three Things, which of all others he would never ſtrive for, the Wall, the Way, and the beſt Seat; and to prevent the Quarrels that muſt neceſſarily follow from our ſo doing, our Saviour bids us beware of loving, or ambitiouſly contending for the uppermoſt Places at Feaſts, and the chief Seats in the Synagogues, *Mark* xii. 39. *Mat.* xxiii. 6. But notwithſtanding all this, how many Quarrels do we hear of upon that Account; and this inſinuating Vice, as is crept into Heaven, and Paradiſe, ſo is it too viſible in the Chriſtian Church, where many times, by the earneſt Contentions that are carried on for the ſake of an uppermoſt Seat, and ſuch Quarrels as are ſometimes entail'd upon Poſterity too, it manifeſtly appears how the Love of Preheminence prevails over the Love both of God, and our Neighbour; and that *Solomon* had Reaſon enough to call ſuch proud Wrath, *Prov.* xxi. 24. as a certain Author of our Nation joins the proud Man, and the cholerick together; "For "Pride, ſays he, *(b)* is the Choler of the Mind, and "Choler is the Pride of the Body."

XI. And thus having ſhewed what are generally the Cauſes of Quarrels and Debates, to render the ſame ſtill more odious, let us enquire a little into the Effects and Conſequents of them too: And here in the firſt Place, that they are very troubleſome and unpleaſant, appears from the Words of the wiſe Son of *David*, Prov. xv. 17. *Better is a Dinner of Herbs, where Love is, than a ſtalled Ox, and Hatred therewith: Better is a dry Morſel, and Quietneſs therewith, than a Houſe full of Sacrifices* (or good Cheer) *with Strife*, Prov. xvii. 1. and again, *Prov.* xxv. 24. *It is better to dwell in a Corner of the Houſe-top, than with a brawling Woman, and in a wide Houſe*; and *Prov.* xxix. 9. *If a wiſe Man contendeth with a fooliſh Man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no reſt.* In the next Place St. *Paul* reckons ſuch Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, and Strife among the Works of the Fleſh, *Gal.* v. 19, 20. and makes it an evident Sign of the Corinthians being Carnal,

(a) His Meditations and Vows, cent. 2. §. 33. *(b)* Feltham's *Reſolves.* Centur. 1. §. 73. p. 225. ed. 7. Lond. 1647.

1 Cor.

1 *Cor.* iii. 3. that there were among them Strife, and Diviſions. The ſame Apoſtle tells us farther the greater Danger of the ſame, where he ſays, *Gal.* v. 15. *If ye bite, and devour one another, take heed leſt ye be conſumed one of another*; as alſo *Solomon*, ſaying, *Prov.* xxvi. 17. *He that meddleth with Strife belongeth not to him, is like one that taketh a Dog by the Ears*, i. e. may ſooner catch hurt, than do Good. To all which we may add the Words of Saint *James*, Ch. iii. v. 16. *Where Envying, and Strife is, there is Confuſion, and every evil Work:* There is nothing ſo miſerable, and ſo ſinful, no Curſe to any Community, or Unquietneſs to any particular Perſon, but what is certainly there to be expected; no manner of Wickedneſs, but what is there to be found: Hence in the Book of *Proverbs* we are told *Prov.* x. 32. *That the Mouth of the Wicked ſpeaketh frowardneſs*; and *Prov.* xvii. 19. *He that loveth Strife, loveth Tranſgreſſion*; and as a bad Wife is there repreſented to be loud and clamorous, *Prov.* vii. 11. and ix. 13. ſo part of a good one is couched in theſe Words, *Prov.* xxxi. 26. *She openeth her Mouth with Wiſdom, and in her Tongue is the Law of Kindneſs:* Yea, in the Deſcription of a Man of Belial, a very naughty and wicked Perſon, it is ſaid, *Prov.* vi. 12, 14. *He walketh with a froward Mouth; he ſoweth Diſcord, and deviſeth Miſchief continually*; which muſt needs be very wicked indeed, as ſo nearly reſembling the Practice of the Devil himſelf; for ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, *Jam.* iii. 14, 15. *If ye have bitter Envying, and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lye not againſt the Truth:* For this Wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh; ſuch bitter Strife and Contention being contrary to that true celeſtial Wiſdom, which is gentle, peaceable, and eaſy to be intreated.

XII. When there was a Strife between the Herdmen of *Abram*'s Cattel, and the Herdmen of *Lot*'s Cattel by reaſon that their Subſtance, and Stock was ſo great, that they could not well dwell together, *Gen.* xiii. 6, 7, 8, 9. how mildly doth *Abram*, though the more worthy Perſon, expoſtulate the Caſe with his Nephew *Lot? Let there be no Strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my Herdmen and thy Herdmen, for we be Brethren* (or near Kinſmen,) *is not the whole Land before thee? ſeparate thy ſelf I pray thee from me; if thou wilt take the left hand,*

then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. On the other Hand, the Strife and Contention between *Iſaac*'s Herdmen, and the Herdmen of *Gerar* (Perſons of a more baſe and ſervile Diſpoſition) about Water, was ſo very great; that one of the Wells they quarrel'd about was thenceforth called *Eſek*, i. e. Contention; and the other *Sitnah*, i. e. Hatred, *Gen.* xxvi. 20, 21. And are there not even in our Days, moſt bitter Quarrels and Contentions, about the ſame uſeful Element, which the God of Nature would have us all as freely to enjoy, as the Air they breath in. That *Fountain of living Waters*, Jer. ii. 13. that everlaſting Spring from whence all manner of good Things do inceſſantly flow, *Jam.* i. 17. *is not the Author* (nor Lover) *of Unquietneſs, and Confuſion, but of Peace*, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. and yet thoſe who call themſelves by his Name, how contrary do they act both to his Word and Will? How common among them is ſuch a contentious Peeviſhneſs, as makes them for every little Trifle to begin Quarrels, and carry them on with the greateſt Heat imaginable: There cannot be a Place diſpoſed of, or an Eſtate purchaſed; there cannot be a Bargain made, or a Will left, but there is a great Danger of a Long Law-ſuit, or at leaſt a great deal of Brawling, and Quarreling among the Perſons concerned.

XIII. We are told, *Prov.* xx. 3. That *'tis an Honour for a Man to ceaſe from Strife, though every Fool will be medling*: and therefore as St. *Paul* tells the Corinthians, 2 *Cor.* xii. 20. *He was afraid, leſt when he came, he ſhould find amongſt them Debates, Strifes, Swellings, and Tumults*; ſo he exhorts all to avoid whatſoever does tend only to breed Quarrels, and create Debates, which never do any Good, 2 *Tim.* ii. 23. For thoſe Sayings of *Solomon* will eternally hold true, *A ſoft Anſwer turneth away Wrath, whilſt grievous Words ſtir up Anger*, Prov. xv. 1. *By long forbearing is a Prince perſwaded, and a ſoft Tongue breaketh the Bone*; or appeaſeth the Man that ſeems outragious, and hard to be pacified, *Prov.* xxv. 15. Thus *Jacob*, by his ſoft Language, and ſubmiſſive Behaviour did pacifie his Brother *Eſau*, Gen. xxxii. 4, *&c.* of whom, by reaſon of an old Grudge, and ſome malicious Threats (*Gen.* xxvii. 41, 42.) he had reaſon to be, (as we find he was, *Gen.* xxxii. 7.) *greatly afraid.*

Thus

Thus *Gideon*, by an humble, and meek Anſwer appeaſed the Wrath of the Men of *Ephraim*; for ſo we read, *Judg.* viii. 2, 3. That when he had thus ſpoken, their Anger was abated toward him; and thus we alſo find, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 10, *&c.* That as *Nabal* by churliſh Language provoked *David* to Wrath: So by the contrary, *Abigail* aſſwaged the ſame. And indeed, as the Roman (*a*) Orator obſerved, It is no eaſy Matter to relate how much the Minds of Men are gained, and conciliated by Mildneſs and Affability: Such courteous Language is ſtrangely Charming, and doth inſenſibly turn Men's Hearts; only we muſt be ſure to take care, that *whilſt the Words of our Mouth are ſmoother than Butter*, we have no *War in our Hearts*; and whilſt they ſeem *ſofter than Oil*, they be not *drawn Swords*, Pſal. lv. 21. which leads to another thing to be condemned; and that is Diſſembling, or Deceit.

(*a*) *Difficile eſt dicere, quantopere conciliet animos hominum comitas, affabilitáſq; ſermonis.* Cic. de Offic. l. 2.

SECT. IX.

Of Diſſimulation, or Deceit.

I. FOR Diſſembling, Diſſimulation, or Deceit is, (*a*) when a Man's Words do not agree with his Thoughts, but he ſays one thing and Means another; eſpecially when one who imagineth Miſchief, pretends Kindneſs; or as *Solomon* words it, *Whoſe Hatred is covered by Deceit, who diſſembleth with his Lips, and layeth up Deceit within him*, Prov. xxvi. 24. For all is not Gold that gliſters; and as the Panther firſt with his ſweet Breath draws other Beaſts unto him, and then devours them: So there be many fair Tongues, accompanied with falſe Hearts, (*b*) and ſeem moſt pleaſant when they are contriving moſt Miſchief; to whom thoſe Words of the Pſalmiſt, concerning the Behaviour of the incredulous, and diſobedient Jews towards God, may be applied, *They did but flatter with their Mouth, and lyed unto him with their Tongues; for their Heart was not right with him*, Pſal. lxxviii. 36, 37.

II. Thus the Sons of *Jacob* are ſaid to have anſwered *Shechem*, and *Hamor* his Father deceitfully, *Gen.* xxxiv. 13,

(*a*) *Cum aliud quis linguâ loquitur, aliud volutat in corde.*
(*b*) *Mel in ore, verba lactis: fel in corde, fraus in factis.*

&c. and ſo it appears they did, by their wheedling them in to be circumciſed, that they might the better murder them; being no doubt of the ſame Mind with *Lyſander*, the Lacedæmonian General, who was wont to ſay, (*a*) "Where "the Lion's Skin will not prevail, or do the Buſineſs, we "muſt put on the Fox's." Thus *Delilah*, that diſſembling Harlot, how fairly doth ſhe ſpeak to *Sampſon*, while ſhe was plotting to deliver him up to the Philiſtines? *Judg.* xvi. 15. and how deceitfully did *Joab* call *Abner* aſide, as if he deſigned to ſpeak peaceably with him, when his Intent was (as indeed he did) to ſtab him? 2 *Sam.* iii. 27. Had not *David* ſufficient Reaſon to ſay of *Doeg* the Edomite, *That his Tongue deviſed Miſchiefs, working deceitfully like a ſharp Razor; that he loved Evil more than good, and lying rather than to ſpeak Righteouſneſs; and that his deceitful Tongue loved all devouring Words*, Pſal. lii. 2, *&c.* with 1 Sam. xxii. 9, *&c.* And how good ſoever his Intentions may have been, with relation to King *David*; yet certainly, *Huſhai*'s inſinuating himſelf into *Abſolom*'s Councils, when his Purpoſe was to betray them, and uſing ſuch fair Speeches, when he deſigned to do him all the Miſchief he could, can never be commended, 2 *Sam.* xvi. 16, *&c.* and xvii. 15, *&c.* When *Herod* bid the wiſe Men go, and ſearch diligently for the young Child *Jeſus*, and when they had found him, to bring him word again, that he might go and worſhip him, when he intended to kill him, it was a great piece of Diſſimulation, *Mat.* ii. 8. as was alſo that of *Judas*, when he ſaluted him with a Hail Maſter, and a Kiſs, at the ſame time that he came to betray him, *Mat.* xxvi. 49. *Nehemiah* tells us, ch. vi. 2. That *Sanballat* and *Geſhem* ſent unto him, ſaying, *Come, let us meet together in ſome one of the Villages, in the Plain of* Ono; but all the while they thought to do him Miſchief: With which I may well join the like Treachery of wicked *Alcimus*, who coming with a great Power into the Land of *Judea*, ſent Meſſengers to *Judas*, and his Brethren with peaceable Words deceitfully; ſpeaking unto them peaceably, and ſwearing unto them, ſaying *We will procure the harm neither of you, nor your Friends*; when preſently of thoſe who were ſo ſilly as to believe him, he put Threeſcore to death, 1 *Mac.* vii. 10, 15, 16.

(*a*) Plutarch. *in Lacon. Apoph.* p. 400. Francof. 1603.

III. But

III. But alaſs! we need not go ſo far backward for Inſtances of this Nature: For even in theſe our Days we may meet with a multitude of ſuch fine Words, and fair Speeches from Perſons, (*a*) who will make large Profeſſions of Kindneſs to their Neighbours, whom, as ſoon as ever their Backs are turned, they will either deride, or miſchief; Perſons, *whoſe Words are ſmoother than Butter,* (*b*) *and ſofter than Oil, whilſt all the while they have War in their Hearts,* Pſal. lv. 21. Nothing in the World is more common than theſe Friends, as we call them, (*c*) from the Teeth outward; whilſt in the mean time *they deviſe deceitful Matters againſt them that are quiet in the Land,* Pſal. xxxv. 20. *David* complained in his Time, That ſuch as ſought after his Life, *laid Snares for him,* and they that ſought his Hurt, *ſpake miſchievous Things, and imagined Deceits all the Day long,* Pſal. xxxviii. 12. And how many are there now of the ſame Temper? Faithfulneſs and Truth are rarely to be met with; neither doth the moſt cunning Huntſmen, and Fowlers lay ſo many Snares to catch their Game, or their Prey, as deſigning Men do to trepan one another, *Jer.* v. 26. ſo that we may apply to our ſelves the Words of the Prophet, *Jer.* xi. 6. and truly ſay, *Our Habitation is in the midſt of Deceit*; and as he wiſh'd, *v.* 2. *that he had but a Lodging Place of way-faring Men in the Wilderneſs,* any ſorry Lodge or Shed in the moſt ſolitary Deſart, that he might get out of the *Aſſemblies of ſuch treacherous Men*; ſo whoſoever would be free from them now, muſt either die and go into another World, or utterly ſhun all Converſation and Fellowſhip with Men in this.

IV. 'Tis ſaid of *Lewis* XI. King of *France,* That he would have his Son learn no more *Latin,* than One Sentence, (*d*) to teach him to be a Diſſembling Ruler: And of *Charles Emanuel* I. Duke of *Savoy,* That he was ſo great a Diſſembler, and his Breaſt ſo impenetrable, as that his Heart was covered with more Mountains, than his Country: Which Practice, however, ſome may make uſe of, yet none can juſtifie, and maintain. For Speech was

(*a*) Ἕδλα ἀγορεύοντες, κακὰ δὲ φρεσὶ βυσσοδομεύων. Homer. *Odyſſ.* ε. (*b*) Βύσσινα ἐήματα. (*c*) Φίλοι ἀπὸ γλώσσης. (*d*) *viz. Qui neſcit Diſſimulare, neſcit regnare.*

no

no doubt given Men, that they might the better communicate their Minds and Conceptions to one another; whence the Rabbi's are ſaid to obſerve, That in ſeveral Places of *Holy Writ* the Word which we tranſlate Speaking, ſignifies in the Original, both ſpeaking and thinking; to teach us, That we ought to think before we ſpeak, and not to ſpeak otherwiſe than we think: Whence 'tis reported of *Frederick* the Emperor, (*a*) That having ſummoned together all his Counſellors, before they entred the Senate, or Parliament-Houſe, he deſired them firſt to lay aſide Two things, and then they would be the better able to judge and adviſe aright: And being ask'd, What thoſe Two Things were? He anſwered, Counterfeiting and Diſſembling: For, ſaid he, if you think one thing, and ſpeak another, there muſt certainly be Deceit.

V. And indeed, there is a great deal of reaſon for all Perſons, according to St. *Peter*'s Exhortations, 1 *Pet.* ii. 3. *To lay aſide all Guile and Hypocriſie*; and not to be of the number of thoſe *Double Tongued*, St. *Paul* condemns, 1 *Tim.* iii. 8. which ſort of Perſons, ſince, even by the wiſer Heathens, they were granted to be ſo ſcandalous, (*b*) and baſe; ſo odious, (*c*) and deteſtable: No wonder they are ſo abominable in God's Sight, and that he hath declared he will *deſtroy for ever Men of ſuch deceitful Tongues*: That *he will take them away, and pluck them out of their dwelling Places, and root them out of the Land of the Living*, Pſal. lii. 4, 5. That *the Congregation of ſuch Hypocrites ſhall be deſolate*, Job xv. 34. and that *they themſelves ſhall fall into the Pit they dig for others*, Pſal. lvii. 6. ſo that we may very well here make uſe of the Pſalmiſts words, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 12, 13. *What Man is he, that deſireth Life, and loveth many Days, that he may ſee good? Keep thy Tongue from Evil, and thy Lips from ſpeaking guile,*

VI. But then, if all ſuch double-tongued and deceitful Perſons are to be condemned, then certainly much more thoſe who feign themſelves to be Friends, when they are not ſo; and if all Hypocriſie and Diſſimulation be ſo odious and baſe, then to be ſure that muſt more-eſpecially be

(*a*) Æneas Sylvius *de Dict. Frider. Imper.* (*b*) *Turpe eſt aliud loqui, & aliud ſentire.* Senec. *ad Lucil. Ep.* (*c*) Ἐχθρός γάρ μοι κεῖνος, &c. Achilles *apud* Homer. *Il.* 1.

eſteemed

eſteemed ſo, which deceives and beguiles under the colour and pretence of Kindneſs and Love. For we are to *love one another, not in Word, or in Tongue only, but in Deed, and in Truth,* 1 Joh. iii. 18. it being, as the Heathen Oratour (*a*) obſerves, much more ingenuous and commendable, openly for a Man to profeſs his Hatred, than thus baſely to cover and conceal it. Hence St. *Paul* tells us, *Rom.* xii. 9. *Our Love ought to be without Diſſimulation,* i. e. ſincere, and unfeign'd; not pretending Kindneſs and Friendſhip for another, whilſt we harbour ſecret Rancour and Malice in our Hearts againſt him. Such a deceitful Diſſembler *Solomon* likens to a *Potſheard covered with Silver droſs,* Prov. xxvi. 23. *Burning Lips, and a wicked Heart, are like a Potſheard covered with Silver droſs:* i. e. Lips ſeeming to burn with Affection, and to be inflamed by Love (of which they make great Profeſſion, whilſt evil is imagined in the Heart) may be compared to ſome earthen Veſſel, which being waſh'd over, or covered only with argyriſts, (or the Scum or Droſs thereof) makes a ſhew as if it were all good, maſſy, and ſubſtantial Silver. Beſides, what St. *Auguſtine* ſays (*b*) of counterfet Holineſs, may be likewiſe ſaid of diſſembled Kindneſs too, That it is a *double Iniquity*: Hence, in Holy Writ, *Iniquity and Deceit* are joined together by the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xxxvi. 6. *Malignity and Deceit* by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* i. 29. and *Wickedneſs and Deceit* by the Saviour of Mankind, *Mark* vii. 22. and hence, as *Solomon* ſays, *He that ſpeaketh Truth, ſheweth forth Righteouſneſs,* Prov. xii. 17. ſo holy *David* couples thoſe that do not with the Workers of Iniquity, *Pſal.* xxviii. 3. *Pluck me not away,* ſays he, *with the Wicked, and with the Workers of Iniquity: which ſpeak Peace to their Neighbours, but Miſchief is in their Hearts.* Yea, as a wicked Man is then worſt of all when he feigns himſelf to be holy or good; ſo the Prophet *Jeremiah* makes ſuch Diſſemblers to exceed the reſt of their Companions in Wickedneſs, *Jer.* v. 25, *&c. Your Iniquities,* ſays he to the *Jews, have turned away*

(*a*) *Apertè vel odiſſe magis ingenuum eſt, quàm fronte occultare ſententiam.* Cic. de Amic. p. 174. (*b*) *Simulata Sanctitas duplex Iniquitas.* Aug.—*Totius Injuſtitiæ nulla eſt capitalior, quam eorum, qui cùm maximè fallunt, id agunt, ut boni videantur,* Cic. de Offi. l. 1.

theſe

theſe things, and your Sins have with-holden good things from you: For among my People are found wicked Men, they lay wait as he that ſetteth Snares, they ſet a Trap, they catch men; as a Cage is full of Birds, ſo are their Houſes full of Deceit; Yea, they overpaſs the Deeds of the Wicked.

VII. And as this Practice, (how common ſo ever it may be) doth nevertheleſs appear to be very wicked; ſo likewiſe, how ſafe and ſecure ſoever it may be thought, it is really not ſo: For, *whoſe Hatred is covered by Deceit, his Wickedneſs ſhall be ſhewed before the whole Congregation*, Prov. xxvi. 26. yea it ſhall not only be detected, but puniſhed too. Thus as well in the forementioned Place, *Jer.* v. 29. after having ſet forth the hainous Wickedneſs of ſuch Diſſemblers: As alſo a little after, *Jer.* ix. 8, 9. where by the ſame Prophet, *Their Tongue is* ſaid to be, *as an Arrow ſhot out, ſpeaking Deceit, ſpeaking peaceably to their neighbour with their mouths, but in their Heart, laying wait*; it immediately follows, *Shall I not viſit* (i. e. *puniſh*) *them for theſe things, ſaith the Lord? Shall not my Soul be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this?* yea, no doubt, he will not only *viſit their Tranſgreſſions with the Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes*, Pſal. lxxxix. 32. but he will *viſit and deſtroy them, and make all their memory to periſh*, Iſa. xxvi. 14. and therefore, ſaith St. *Paul*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 6. *Let no Man go beyond, and defraud his Brother in any Matter, becauſe that the Lord is the avenger of all ſuch:* all their deceitful Speeches, overreaching Devices, and fraudulent Intentions are naked and open to that great God, who plainly ſees, and diſcerns all the *windings and turnings of our Hearts*, Heb. iv. 13. and *underſtands our Thoughts afar off*; and long before we conceive them, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 2. ſo that, upon the whole, we may very well conclude with the wiſe King, *Prov.* x. 18. *He that hideth Hatred with lying Lips is a Fool.*

VIII. And to prevent his making others ſo too, the beſt way will be for all to ſhun, and avoid ſo dangerous a Monſter; ſo dangerous, that his Tongue is compared to a *ſharp Sword*, Pſal. lvii. 4. and to a *ſharp Raſor working deceitfully*, Pſal. lii. 2. or the Raſor of ſome deceitful Barber, wherewith, inſtead of triming a Man, he cuts his Throat: And for the ſame Reaſon, from the *Latin* word for Deceit (*a*) or Guile, thoſe Poles or Staffs, which ſeem-

(*a*) *Dolus.*

ing

ing to be all of Wood, do notwithſtanding contain Iron Skeans, or little Daggers within them, have their Denomination (*a*) in the ſame Language. And therefore, as *Homer* (*b*) adviſeth, By no means to converſe, or keep Company with ſuch hollow Diſſemblers; ſo when it was his Misfortune to have got among them, how paſſionately doth the Prophet *Jeremiah* wiſh to be freed from them, *Jer.* ix. 2. *Oh!* ſays he, *that I had in the Wilderneſs a lodging place, that I might leave my People, and go from them, for they are an Aſſembly of treacherous Men.* He was for any place, (tho' never ſo deſolate and loneſome) where they were not; and preferr'd before their Company, that of the moſt ſavage Beaſts.

IX. And truly I cannot ſee, what Advantage, or Delight there can be in converſing with Perſons, that we can neither truſt nor believe: For the Advice *Solomon* gives in this Caſe is this, *He that hateth, diſſembleth with his Lips, and layeth up Deceit within him: When he ſpeaketh fair, believe him not, for there are Seven* (*i. e.* many) *Abominations in his Heart*, Prov. xxvi. 24, 25. According to the old Proverb, *He ſhews Bread in one Hand, but treacherouſly carries a Stone in the other*; and he is ſo much the more dangerous, (*c*) by how much the more he conceals his intended Miſchief, under the Cloak and diſguiſe of Kindneſs, and good Will: Whence *Theophylact* (*d*) compares ſuch a treacherous Diſſembler to the Withy-weed, or Ivy, which kill thoſe Trees and Shrubs they cling the cloſeſt about; for ſo we are told, *Prov.* xi. 9. That *an Hypocrite with his Mouth deſtroyeth his Neighbour*, i. e. if he liſten to his fair Pretences. And he certainly that would ruin and deſtroy a Man if he could, can never put in to be reckon'd among thoſe that are really his Friends. I cannot conclude this Head better than with the Words of the Preacher, *Eccleſ.* vii. 26. If what he ſpeaks only of deceitful Women, be applied to all ſuch Diſſemblers, of what Sex or Condition ſoever; *I find*, ſays he, *more bitter than Death, the Woman whoſe Heart is Snares and Nets, and her Hands as Bands, whoſo pleaſeth God ſhall eſcape from her.*

(*a*) *Dolones.* (*b*) Μὴ πάντα, &c. Odyſſ. 18. (*c*) *Quod tegitur, majus creditur eſſe malum.* Martial. (*d*) *Smilaci æquiparantur*, &c. Theophylact. *in* c. 1. Naum.

SECT.

SECT. X.

Of Flattery.

I. ADulation or Flattery, is a kind of wheedling or cajoling, (*a*) when a Perſon, in common Converſation, doth either by Words or Actions ſtrive to pleaſe another, more than right Reaſon, or a due Decorum will allow, praiſing and commending him for ſome ill End, or ſiniſter Deſign; or for what is not laudable, and praiſe-worthy: Or enlarging his Commendations more than he ought, to the uttering manifeſt Untruth; which baſe Vice, as I have placed between Diſſimulation and Lying (of which it is generally compounded) ſo the leſs need there will be to ſay much about it. For the Flatterer's Heart and Tongue are at a great diſtance, notwithſtanding all his obſequious Behaviour, and ſpecious Pretences, which commonly laſt no longer than till he hath gain'd his End and Deſign, which is for the moſt part either his own Benefit and Advantage; or the Hurt or Damage of another.

II. Firſt, one of the chief Ends ſuch treacherous and inſinuating Perſons do often propoſe to themſelves, is their own Benefit and (*b*) Advantage, flattering thoſe moſt, who are beſt able to do them a Kindneſs; and ſo they can but obtain their Favour, will turn Vices into Vertues, and *Satan himſelf into an Angel of Light*, 2 *Cor.* xi. 14. The moſt diſſolute Prodigal, that waſts his Subſtance with riotous Living, is by them called Liberal and Generous, and the covetous Niggard, provident and thrifty; the Cowardly and Fearful, they term wary and wiſe; and the Raſh and Fool-hardy, daring and brisk; the mean and abject Perſon, they will pronounce to be endued with abundance of Humanity and good Nature, and ſay the Proud and Haughty is illuſtrious and noble. Thus when *Herod* was highly diſpleaſed with them of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, and they ſent ſome to deſire Peace, and to be reſtored to his Favour, he appointed a Day for Audience of their Commiſſioners, and

(*a*) Th. Aquin. 2ª. 2æ. qu. 115. p. 208. col. 2. Paris 1622.
(*b*) *Imperavi egomet mihi Omnia aſſentari: Is queſtus nunc eſt multò uberrimus.* Terent. Eunuch.

made

made a Speech unto them from the Throne; upon the hearing of which, they gave a ſhout, ſaying, *It is the Voice of God, and not of a Man:* Or he ſpeaks more like the former, than like the latter, *Acts* xii. 20. *&c.* the reaſon of which moſt abominable Flattery was, becauſe they thought thereby to inſinuate themſelves into his Favour, for as much as their Country was nouriſhed by the Kings Country: Like thoſe Lying Prophets and Propheteſſes the Lord condemns, *Ezek.* xiii. 10. 18, 19. *who for handfuls of Barley, and Pieces of Bread, (i. e.* any ſlender Reward) and the better to pleaſe the People, *Cryed Peace, when there was no Peace;* and pretended *thoſe ſhould be ſaved alive, whom God hath determined to deſtroy; But he that put not into their Mouths, they prepared War againſt him,* Mic. iii. 5.

III. But Secondly, as one End ſuch Flatterers propoſe to themſelves, is their own Gain and Advantage; ſo another is the deceiving, hurting, or prejudicing others: Whence *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xxix. 5. That *a Man who flattereth his Neighbour, ſpreadeth a Net for his Feet:* Thus the *Phariſees* and *Herodians* came unto our Saviour, *Mat.* xxii. 15, 16. and ſaid unto him, *Maſter, we know that thou art true, and teacheſt the way of God in Truth, neither careſt thou for any Man, for thou regardeſt not the Perſons of Men:* But for all theſe fine Speeches, their Deſign was (as St. *Matthew* there tells us) *to intangle him in his talk, or to inſnare and trepan him.* It is ſaid, That the Fiſh called *Polypus,* (*a*) can change its Colour like the Place where it is, and by this Means gets its Food; for lying lurking cloſe by the ſides and roots of the Rocks, and changing its ſelf into the ſame Colour, ſo as to ſeem part of the Rock to which it cleaves, it ſuddenly preys upon the Fiſh that ſwim by, dreading nothing, and devours them: It is ſaid alſo of the Panthers, (*b*) That by their ſweet and odoriferous Breath, they entice other Beaſts to come unto them, and then eat them; ſo Flatterers will be any thing for their own Ends, and having falſe Hearts, as well as fair Tongues, will not ſcruple to praiſe thoſe they hate; and fawn on thoſe they would have cruſh'd to pieces; Yea, thoſe they deſign to hurt moſt,

(*a*) *Adulatoris, veluti Polypi,* &c. Plutarch. *de Adul. & Amic. diſcr.* p. 151. *iuter opera moralia,* &c. Francof. 1603. (*b*) Swan's *Speculum Mundi.* c. 9. §. 1. p. 436. Cambr. 1644.

they will many times pretend to be moſt in love with, and admire; as the Shell-fiſh is mounted aloft in the Eagles Talons, that it my be ſhattered with the greater fall.

IV. The wiſe King of *Iſrael* tells us, *Prov.* xxvi. 28. That *a flatttering Mouth worketh ruin*; the ruin both of the Flatterers themſelves, as well as ſuch as are ſo bewitch'd as to liſten to them. For firſt, as to the Flatterers themſelves, they are an Abomination to all good Men, as well as to the *God of Truth*, who hath commanded us *not to deceive with our Lips*, Prov. xxiv. 28. for as *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xxiv. 24. *He that ſaith unto the wicked thou art righteous, ſhall be curſed by the People, and abhor'd by the Nations*; So doth he alſo aſſure us, *Prov.* xvii. 15. That *he that juſtifieth the Wicked, as well as he that condemneth the Juſt is an abomination unto the Lord*; and accordingly we find a Woe pronounced againſt ſuch *as call Evil Good, and Good Evil*; *that put Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs*; *that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter*; *which juſtifie the Wicked for a Reward, and take away the Righteouſneſs of the Righteous from him*, Iſa. *v.* 20. 23 and therefore, ſaith the Prophet, *v.* 24. *as the Fire devoureth the Stubble, and the Flame conſumeth the Chaff, ſo their Root ſhall be Rottenneſs, and their Bloſſom ſhall go up as Duſt*; which Deſtruction of theirs is elſewhere expreſſed by the *Lords cutting off all flattering Lips*, Pſal. xii. 3. yea, their Poſterity is like to ſuffer for the ſame; and *He that ſpeaketh Flattery to his Friends, even the Eyes of his Children ſhall fall*, Job xvii. 5. 'Tis certain *Elihu* thought that God would inflict ſome great Judgment on ſuch Perſons, when he ſays, *Job* xxxii. 22. *He knew not to give flattering Titles, for in ſo doing his Maker would ſoon take him away, i. e.* from among Men, by ſome violent Death; and great Reaſon indeed he had to dread it: Flattery being not only a baſe, villanous, and ignoble Vice, and a certain and aſſured Sign of an abject Spirit, and ſervile Mind; but it is alſo ſuch a vile compound of Lying, Treachery, Baſeneſs, and ſuch other ſordid (*a*) and odious Qualities, that it cannot ſeem ſtrange at all that it is ſo odious to that God who hath commanded every Man to *ſpeak the Truth of his Neighbour*, Zech. viii. 16.

(*a*) *Aſſentatio vitiorum adjutrix.* Cic. *de Amic.* p. 181. Lond. 1629.

V. *Solomon*

V. *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xxvii. 6. That *the very Kiſſes of an Enemy are deceitful*; now that all ſuch Flatterers are to be accounted Enemies appears from holy *David*'s comparing their *flattering Speeches to drawn Swords*, Pſal. lv. 21. as others have done to the richeſt, and moſt pleaſant Wines mix'd with the rankeſt Poyſon; and to the bewitching Songs of the harmonious *Syrens*, whereby they tempted Paſſengers on Shore, and then kill'd and plunder'd 'em: Or lull'd 'em at leaſt into a ſound Sleep, whilſt their Veſſels ſlipt upon the Rocks: Thus King *Ahab* was ruined by his liſtening too much to his *flattering falſe Prophets*, who perſwaded him *to go up againſt Ramoth Gilead, aſſuring him of Victory and Succeſs*, tho' they had no other reaſon for ſaying ſo, but to humour the King, whom they perceived to be wholly bent on that Expedition, in which he was ſlain, and his Army defeated, 1 *Kings* xxii. 6. 12. 35. Beſides, no Enemy can be ſo dangerous as that which not only kills the Body, but deſtroys the Soul too, as it is to be feared ſuch Flatterers often do, whilſt by ſoothing them up in their Sins, and encouraging them in their Follies, by aſſenting to all they ſay, and commending all they do, they make thoſe, who were not ſo before, become bad Perſons; and thoſe who were bad before, ſtark naught, and moſt intolerable.

VI. But the worſt of it is, as the cunning Anglers, by hiding their pernicious Hooks, under their enticing Baits inveagle the credulous Fiſh to ſwallow their Deſtruction: So theſe falſe and treacherous, tho' pretended Friends, whilſt in the midſt of their Careſſes they are contriving moſt Miſchief, do ſo cover their dangerous Hypocriſie with the ſhew and colour of Love and Amity, that it is no eaſie matter to diſcern it. And this Difficulty is ſtill made the greater, by Mens ſeeming to be ſo naturally inclined to be willing thus to be made fools of: Officiouſneſs and Compliance, are generally accounted *(a)* Signs of true Friendſhip, as well as good Breeding, and for a *Man to ſpeak the Truth* is the ready way to be turned out of favour, *Gal.* iv. 16. and therefore St. *Jerome* calls this Propenſion *(b) a natural Evil*, becauſe all Perſons ſeem ſo very weak in this

(a) Obſequium amicos, veritas odium parit. Terent. *(b)* Hier. *in Epiſt.* 121. *ad* Dabinianum.

Particular, full of Vanity, and desirous of being praised, tho' at the same time they say, they do not deserve it; and are inwardly pleased with what they outwardly condemn: Thus *Æneas Sylvius*, called afterwards (when made Pope) *Pius* II. relates (*a*) concerning one of his Predecessors, *John* XXIII. That being often, during his Pontificate, extolled by such Flatterers to the Skies, he was wont to say, That though he knew what they said was false, yet he was strangely pleased in hearing it. Now such a Delight and Satisfaction as this, can proceed from nothing so much, as that Self-love which is acknowledged to be generally very (*b*) Blind, so that when a Man once comes to be blown up with this tumour of adoring himself, it is no wonder at all he is fond of seeing others do so too: And that nothing is so acceptable to him, as those fulsome Flatteries and Commendations, which by reason of this natural Inclination he hath to receive them, penetrate easily and undiscernably *like Oil into his Bones*, Psal. cix. 18. or rather indeed like those Poysons, that are taken in at the Pores, which are the most difficult to expel, as well as the most easily and insensibly suck'd in.

VII. So that to me there seems no better Antidote against this insinuating Poyson of Flattery, than the most excellent Vertue of Humility; which teaches Men *not to think more highly of themselves than they ought*, Rom. xii. 3. and by putting them in mind of their frail and miserable Condition, prevent their giving way so readily to such treacherous Allurements. Neither may it be amiss for them to consider how intrinsick a part of Flattery Treachery is, which plainly appears from such Flatterers withdrawing their Attendance from those they so much courted before, when they once perceive Fortune to begin to frown on them: As Mice, when a House waxeth ruinous, and ready to fall, are said (*c*) to betake themselves to new Quarters. We are told indeed by *Solomon*, *Prov.* xvii. 17. That *a Friend loveth at all times, and a Brother is born for Adversity*: But, alas! to what Flatterer could any one ever apply those Words of the Psalmist, *Psal.* xxxi. 7. *Thou hast considered my Trouble, thou hast known my Soul in Adversity*:

(*a*) Æneas Sylv. l. 1. *de Dict. & fact.* Alphonsi. (*b*) *Subsequitur cæcus amor sui.* Horat. (*c*) Ælian. *Var. Hist.* l. 1.

(*a*) They

(*a*) They are generally like the Heliotrope or Turnſole, which opens towards the Sun, but ſhuts and contracts it ſelf toward Night, or in cloudy Weather: And are very fitly compared by Holy *Job*, to Winter Brooks, which run over when there is no need of them, but are quite dry, when they are wanted moſt, Job vi. 15. For however the Flatterer may ſtrive to imitate the Friend, yet there is a great deal of difference between the one and the other really, though to outward appearance they ſeem the ſame; and as counterfeit Coin, notwithſtanding it may ſeem to be as bright, and well ſtamp'd as that which is true, yet when brought to the Touchſtone 'tis found to be a cheat: So if theſe deluding Sycophants were weighed in the Balance with ſincere Friends they would be found to be very much wanting. However, to undiſtinguiſhing *Bigots*, a Comet may ſeem as glorious as a Star, and a painted Face at a diſtance may paſs for a good Complexion; ſo by ſuch as go no farther than the outward ſhew, Flattery may be accounted Kindneſs and Affection: Yet ſuch as make any uſe of their Wits or their Senſes, and ſearch deeper into the Matter find vaſt odds between them; they eaſily perceive that the Flatterer conſults only his own particular Benefit and Advantage, but a faithful Friend the Intereſt and Welfare of that Perſon to whom he pretends to be ſo: This is always firm and conſtant, both in Proſperity and Adverſity, but the other changeable as the Wind, and like *Ariſtotle*'s firſt Matter, capable of any Form whatſoever.

VIII. To conclude this Head, however, in this degenerate Age, (wherein Candor (*b*) and Sincerity ſeem almoſt quite extinct, and upon every petty Intereſt ſo many debaſe themſelves by ſuch mean and ſervile Submiſſions) this abominable Vice is grown ſo much in Faſhion: Yet both Sacred and Prophane Hiſtories, of former times, aſſure us, There have been found ſome generous Souls that could never ſtoop ſo low. *Elihu* deſigning to reprove both *Job* and his Three Friends, for their ſo indiſcreetly managing the Diſpute between them; tells them plainly, beforehand, That he was reſolved to ſpeak his mind freely,

(*a*) *Donec eris felix multos numerabis amicos, Nullus ad amiſſas ibit amicus opes.* Ovid. (*b*) *Candor in hoc ævo res intermortua penè.* Ovid.

and *not accept any Mans Perſon*, ſo as to prejudice the Truth; and that he neither would, nor knew *how to give flattering Titles to any Man*, Job xxxii. 21, 22. and Saint *Paul*, as he declares unto the *Corinthians*, That *he would not praiſe them, as long as they came together not for the better, but for the worſe*, 1 Cor. xi. 17. ſo he tells the *Theſſalonians*, *They very well knew that he never at any time uſed flattering Words amongſt 'em*, 1 Theſ. ii. 5. In like manner it is ſaid of that moſt excellent Philoſopher (*a*) *Socrates*, That neither Hunger nor Want, could ever force him to flatter any: and of *Philoxenus*, (*b*) That he choſe rather to dig in the Quarries (to which he was therefore condemn'd) than flatter the Tyrant *Dionyſius*, ſo far as to commend ſome of his Poems, when he knew they did not deſerve it. 'Tis true indeed, an humble Behaviour is ornamental, and ſoft and civil Language is very good and becoming: Yea, to approve and commend Perſons, Things, or Actions, which really deſerve it, is ſometimes both uſeful and neceſſary; but then there muſt be a great deal of Prudence and Caution, that nothing of evil be mingled with the ſame, nothing of Covetouſneſs and Untruth, nothing of Self-love or ſlaviſh Fear: For otherwiſe, there is no doubt to be made, but an honeſt freedom of Speech will to all wiſe Perſons recommend a Man much more than baſe Flattery: Thus St. *Auſtin* ſaid, (*c*) *He had much rather be reproved, than flatter'd*; and *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xxvii. 23. *He that rebuketh a Man, ſhall afterwards find more favour, than he that flattereth with the Tongue*: I ſhall ſhut up all, with a ſaying of St. *Jerome*, (*d*) *O how happy is that Man, who neither flatters others, nor gives ear to thoſe that flatter him: Who neither deceives his Neighbour, nor is impoſed upon himſelf: Who neither doth any ill, nor labours under any Misfortune.*

(*a*) Stanley's *Hiſt. of Philoſophy*, P. III. p. 92. Lond. 1687. (*b*) *Government of the Tongue*, §. 8. p. 139. Oxon. 1675. *Out of* Plutarch. (*c*) *Magis optabo a quolibet reprehendi, quàm ab adulante laudari.* Aug. 9. de Trin. (*d*) *O beatum hominem*, &c. Hieron. *ad Demetr.*

SECT.

SECT. XI.

Of Lying.

I. ANother verbal Injury that may be rank'd among thoſe towards our Neighbour, is Lying: For ſo it is generally defined to be, (*c*) A ſpeaking any Thing contrary to what we think, or know to be true with an Intent do deceive: This being intrinſecally included in the Nature of a Lye; hence it is ſaid, *Prov.* xii. 6. That *the words of the wicked are to lie in wait for Blood*, and *v.* 17. That *a falſe Witneſs ſheweth forth Deceit*; and *Prov.* xiv. 25. He *who ſpeaketh Lyes is deceitful*; and the like. For tho' there be mention made in Scripture of Lying Wonders, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 9. *Of a Lying Spirit in the Mouth of the falſe Prophets*, 1 Kings xxii. 22. *Of Lying to the Holy Ghoſt*, Acts v. 3. and *Lying againſt the Truth*, Jam. iii. 14. Yet that we at preſent are to inſiſt upon, is one Perſon's deceiving another by falſe Signs, or Repreſentations; and this ſome affirm may be done either by Deeds, or Words, or both together.

II. As to the laſt of theſe, we have an Account, *Joſh.* ix. 3, *&c.* of the Gibeonites being guilty of the ſame, when hearing of *Joſhua*'s Victories, and being ſore afraid of their own Lives, becauſe they had heard the Iſraelites were commanded by God to deſtroy all the Inhabitants of the Land before them, *They did work wilily, and went, and made as if they had been Embaſſadors* (ſent unto *Joſhua* from ſome far Country) *and took old Sacks upon their Aſſes, and Wine Bottles old, and rent, and bound up; and old Shooes, and clouted upon their Feet, and old Garments upon them, and all the Bread of their Proviſion was dry and mouldy; and they went to* Joſhua *unto the Camp at* Gilgal, *and ſaid unto him, and to the Men of* Iſrael; *we be come from a far Country, now therefore make a League with us: This our Bread we took hot for our Proviſion out of our Houſes on the Day we came forth, but now it is dry and mouldy: and theſe Bottles of Wine which we filled were new, and behold they be Rent; and theſe our Garments, and our Shooes are become old, by reaſon of*

(*a*) *Falſa verborum prolatio cum intentione fallendi.*

the very long Journey; and by this Diſſimulation, and Lying they prevailed upon *Joſhua* to make a League with them.

III. Again, there is a Lying in Deeds only, without ſuch a Complication of falſe Speeches: Thus *Plutarch* mentions one *Ariſtogiton*, who was wont to talk of nothing but Arms, and Fighting; but as ſoon as he heard that there was to be a general Muſter, and ſome Soldiers were to be pick'd out for ſome certain Expedition; he feigned himſelf very ſick, and weak, had his Legs bound up, as if they were full of Sores, and Wounds, and went about upon Crutches: Which when *Phocion* ſaw from the Judgment-ſeat, where he was ſitting, he ordered him to be recorded, (*a*) A Cripple and a wicked Lyar: And Hiſtorians (*b* make mention of an old Ambaſſador from *Scio* to the Lacedæmonians, who notwithſtanding his great Age, was deſirous of ſeeming young, and to that end, dyed his Grey-hairs of another Colour, when he went to Court to give an Account of the Buſineſs he came about: Which King *Archidamus* perceiving, ſaid, "How can he "be ſuppoſed to ſpeak that which is true and right who "carries about a Lye, and an Untruth on his very Head?" To which perhaps may be added the Patriarchs deceiving *Jacob* with *Joſeph*'s bloody Coat, *Gen.* xxxvii. 31, 32. *Michal*'s putting the Cheat upon *Saul* by an Image laid in *David*'s Bed, 1 *Sam.* xix. 13, 16, 17. *David*'s faining himſelf mad, 1 *Sam.* xxi. 13, 14, *&c.*

IV. Laſtly, there is a Lying, not in Signs, and Actions, but in Words only, when a Man affirms that to be true which he knows to be falſe, or that to be falſe which he knows to be true. Not that every Allegory, (*c*) or Metaphor is a Lye, or that every Alluſion, and Parable is unlawful: In theſe indeed there is ſomething ſuppoſed, and feigned; as when the Trees are by *Jotham* conferring, or conſulting about their King, *Judg.* ix. 8. Yet a Parable is far from Falſhood, or Lying, ſince the Deſign of it is to ſignifie, declare, or illuſtrate a real Truth; whereas to Lye is to ſmother, and conceal that we know to be true,

(*a*) *Scribe Ariſtogitonem claudum, improbum, atq; mendacem.* Plutarch. (*b*) Stob. l. 10. ex Theophraſt.. (*c*) *Quicquid figuratè fit, aut dicitur, non eſt mendacium.* Aug. in Gal.

on

on purpoſe to deceive others. And this is commonly divided (*b*) into a miſchievous or hurtful Lye; a jocoſe Lye; and an officious Lye.

V. The firſt of theſe called a hurtful, * or miſchievous Lye, is either againſt the true Faith, or good Manners; or ſuch a one as does no Body good, but ſome Body harm; or if it do profit one, yet it hurts another: And Covetouſneſs is as oft the Motive thereto, as any thing elſe. Thus *Gehazi* (never valuing how much his Maſter's Honour ſuffered thereby, ſo he got the Prize) unknown to his Maſter *Eliſha*, yea, contrary to his Will and Deſire, runs after *Naaman* the Syrian (whom *Eliſha* had cured of his Leproſy) and by telling him a great Lye, got from him two Changes of Garments, and two Talents of Silver; a pretty round Sum, if, as is generally computed, one Talent of Silver came to three hundred and ſeventy five Pound, 2 *Kings* v. 22. But yet *Hazael* went higher, it was no leſs than a Kingdom he had in his view, when he firſt told his Sovereign a Lye, and then murder'd him; for we read, 2 *Kings* viii. 7, 8, *&c.* That when *Benhadad* King of *Syria* was ſick, he ſent this *Hazael* to *Eliſha* to enquire whether he ſhould recover, or no: The Prophet told him, the King his Maſter ſhould certainly die, and he ſhould ſucceed him: Upon this *Hazael* returns, tells the King, the Prophet ſaid *he ſhould ſurely recover; but the Morrow after he took a thick Cloth, and dipt it in Water, and ſpread it on his Face, ſo that he died; and Hazael reigned in his ſtead.* So likewiſe in the new Teſtament, we find the Souldiers that were ſet to watch our Saviour's Sepulchre, for the ſake of a little Money given them by the chief Prieſts and Elders, to have lyed as faſt as they would have 'em; affirming that our Saviour's *Diſciples came by Night, and ſtole him away, while they were aſleep*, *Mat.* xxviii. 12, 13, 15. and to theſe we may add thoſe two perfidious Hypocrites, *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, Acts v. 2. 8. who having ſold ſome Land, in Imitation of the other Diſciples of Chriſt, for Relief of their poorer Brethren; were deſirous to paſs for as charitable Chriſti-

* *Quod fit cauſâ nocumenti.*

(*a*) *Mendacium perniciosum, jocosum, & utile, ſeu officioſum.* **Aquin.**

ans

ans as the reſt, and yet unwilling to part with their Money; and accordingly they combined together to keep back ſome part of it for themſelves, and yet had the Confidence to tell St. *Peter*, that that part which they brought was the whole Sum for which the Land was ſold.

VI. The ſecond ſort of Lye is called, A jocoſe Lye, (*a*) when without any ſuch Cauſe at all, or only for Sport and Paſtime, Men ſpeak that which is falſe, and tell incredible Stories: Like the Man *Solomon* mentions, *Prov.* xxvi. 19. who deceiveth his Neighbour, and ſaith, *Am not I in ſport?* And laſtly, there is, as it is commonly called, an officious Lye (*b*) which ſeems to be ſervicable on ſome Account or other, and hurts no Body. Such a Lye the Midwives told *Pharaoh*, *Exod.* i. 19. to preſerve the Males of the Children of *Iſrael*; and ſuch a Lye *Rahab* the Harlot told to ſave the two Spies, *Joſ.* ii. 4, 5, 6. as well as the Woman of *Bahurim*, to preſerve *Jonathan* and *Ahimaaz*, 2 Sam. xvii. 20. Yea, ſome think that Excuſe agreed upon between *David*, and *Jonathan*, to be made unto *Saul* for *David*'s Abſence from the Feaſt (where his Life ſeemed to be in Danger) was of the ſame Nature, 1 *Sam.* xx. 6, 7, 28, 29. and what fair Interpretation ſoever may be put on the Words of *Eliſha* to the Syrians, whom being ſmitten with Blindneſs he led out of their deſigned way, 2 *Kings*, vi. 19. Yet when *Huſhai*, the better to ſerve *David*, and ſend him the truer Intelligence, inſinuated himſelf into *Abſalom*'s Counſel, telling him he would be as ready to ſerve him, and as faithfully too, as he ſerved his Father *David* before, 2 *Sam.* xvi, 18, 19. I am afraid he will ſeem fit to be numbred among theſe officious Lyars.

VII. But now the next Thing to be enquired into is, whether or no of theſe diverſe ſort of Lyes any one be more lawful than another, or whether any of them be allowable at all, or not. And here I find not but all agree, that the hurtful and miſchievous Lye is unlawful, and ſinful; and moſt, that the jocoſe Lye is ſo too. It is reported of *Epaminondas*, that noble *Theban* General, that he was ſuch a Lover of Truth, that he would never Lye, no not in jeſt; and truly, whoever calls to Mind how the Apoſtle

(*a*) *Quod fit cauſâ ludi; vel ſolæ mentiendi libidine.* (*b*) *Quod fit cauſâ utilitatis, & nulli obeſt, ſed alicui prodeſt.*

St. *Paul*

St. *Paul* condemns all fooliſh Talking, and Jeſting in general, muſt needs think, that if ſuch Jeſting without Lying, be a Fault, then certainly that which hath Lying mix'd with it, muſt needs be a much greater. So that the chief Diſpute is concerning an officious Lye, whether or no that be allowable: *Plato* (*a*) indeed ſeems to allow a Lye to be lawful, either to ſave a Citizen, or deceive an Enemy: And the moſt rigid Stoicks (*b*) are ſaid to have acknowledged that a good Man might ſometimes lawfully tell a Lye, and that I ſuppoſe was, according to the Permiſſion *Herodotus* gave, (*c*) When it was expedient ſo to do. Some likewiſe affirm that the Socinians allow an officious Lye to be lawfull; and others, that all the Fathers have not been of the contrary Opinion.

VIII. But I am apt to think thoſe the beſt Caſuiſts, who will not allow them to be truly perfect, who willingly and knowingly tell a Lye upon any Account whatſoever: For St. *Paul* forbids *the doing Evil, that Good may come of it*, *Rom.* iii. 8. and tells us, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 6. *That Charity rejoiceth in the Truth*: Now it is certain, That an officious Lye, though it tend not to the hurt of our Neighbour, yet it is to the hurt and Prejudice of Truth, which we are commanded to love and follow after, *Zech.* viii. 19. But then here it is commonly objected, That, *Exod.* i. 19, 20, 21. God is ſaid to have dealt *well with the Midwives* (who told an officious Lye to *Pharaoh*) *and to have made them Houſes*; whence they infer the doing the ſame to be lawful: But it muſt be likewiſe obſerved that this Bleſſing was granted to them, not for their Lying, but their Faith: The Works which they did were excellent Works of Mercy, and therefore allowable, and the Doers only failed in the manner of performing them: Their Act was a mix'd Act, conſiſting of Piety to God, Pity to his People, and Fallacy in Lying to the King: The two firſt of theſe were graciouſly accepted, and rewarded by God; the third was mercifully paſſed by, and pardon'd by him. The ſame may be ſaid with Relation to *Rahab*,

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(*a*) Plato. l. 3. de Rep. & Feltham's *Reſolves*, cent. 1. §. 42. p. 135. Lond. 1647. (*b*) *Stoicorum aſperrimi*, &c. Quintil. *Inſtit.* l. 12. c. 1. p. 557. Genev. 1625. (*c*) Ἐνθα γάρ τι δεῖ καὶ Ψεῦδος λεγέσθω. Herod l. 3. p. 191.

whole

whoſe whole Speech to the King of *Jericho*'s Meſſengers, in all the Parts, and Branches of it, was nothing elſe but a continued Equivocation, and a deluding Lye, *Joſh.* ii. 4, 5, 6. and yet the Apoſtles tell us, That *by Faith ſhe periſhed not with them that believed not, when ſhe had received the Spies with Peace*, Heb. xi. 31. and that ſhe was *juſtified by Works, when ſhe had received the Meſſengers, and had ſent them out another way*, Jam. ii. 25. For there we find an Act of Faith, inaſmuch as ſhe, who had been an Idolatreſs before, ſhould then acknowledge the God of *Iſrael* to be the true God; and an Act of Charity, in taking ſuch Care to preſerve thoſe, who were ſent to view the Land. Now though God accepted of, and rewarded her Faith and Charity, yet he no Ways approved of her Lyes. So that ſince we find all Lyars in general condemn'd to everlaſting Flames, *Rev.* xxi. 8. notwithſtanding *Aquinas* (*a*) comes with his unaccountable Diſtinction of Sins into mortal, and venial; and tells us, That a pernicious, or hurtful Lye is of the firſt ſort; but an officious, or jocoſe Lye of the latter; we may yet with more Safety conclude all, and every kind of Lying to be unlawfull; and that not without Reaſon.

IX. For, Firſt, Lying is a plain Deviation from the End of Speech (which was given us to be (*b*) the Interpreter of the Mind,) and makes one of the greateſt Prerogatives of Mankind (whereby we acquire an aptneſs, or readineſs to expreſs the Truth of our Sentiments) an Inſtrument of the greateſt Miſchief. Secondly, it is likewiſe a Deviation from the Law of Truth, *Mal.* ii. 6. for which we always ought to have a very great Regard; and therefore St. *Paul* exhorts, *Eph.* iv. 25. That *putting away Lying every Man ſpeak the Truth with his Neighbour.* Thirdly, it is alſo deſtructive to humane Society, and is a treacherous Breach of Faith towards thoſe of our own kind: Whence the Apoſtle after the forementioned Words, wherein he commands to abſtain from Lying, *Eph.* iv. 25: preſently adds this, as a Reaſon for our ſo doing, *becauſe we are all Members one of another*, and parts of the ſame

(*a*) *Mendacium perniciosum peccatum mortale eſt: officiorum verò, ac jocoſum veniale eſſe contingit.* Aquin. 2a. 2æ. art. 4. p. 204. col. 2. qu. 110. Paris 1622. (*b*) *Index animi.*

Body

Body of Mankind; yea, of the ſame myſtical Body of Chriſt: And therefore as in the Natural Body one Member doth not deceive another: So likewiſe in this Body, whereof we are all Members, it would ſeem very monſtrous and abſurd for us (betwixt whom there is ſo near and ſtrong a Tye) by Lying and Falſehood to deceive one another. As Speech was given us, to promote mutual Intercourſe and Society by diſcovering our Mind and Thoughts one to another, and therein rendring our Converſation different from that of (*a*) Beaſts; ſo ſpeaking Truth is a common Debt we owe to every one, and are ſtrictly obliged to pay, by an implicit Compact, and Agreement, in order to the Maintenance of Society, and Commerce; and not by falſe Informations to impoſe upon any; and therefore *Cicero* (*b*) would have all manner of Lying to be utterly baniſhed from all Contracts, Covenants and Bargains; according to the light of Nature he found out that Command of God, to be *holy, juſt and good*, Rom. vii. 12. wherein he charges the Jews, *Lev.* xxv. 14. *Whether they bought or ſold, not to oppreſs* (or as ſome render it) *not to cheat, defraud, or coſen one another.* For if in ſuch Caſes Lying be allowed, Faith and Truth muſt periſh of courſe; and then what Dealing, what Correſpondence, what Converſation can there be in the World? Who can truſt, believe, or love that Man, that never ſpeaks the Truth in his Heart? *Pſal.* xv. 2. It is an old ſaying, (*c*) Give me a Lyar, and I will ſhew you a Thief: We read indeed that by this means ambitious *Abſalom* ſtole away the Hearts of the Men of *Iſrael*, 2 Sam. xv. 3, 4, 6. with viii. 15. and perfidious *Ziba* the Goods and Eſtate of his Maſter *Mephiboſheth*, 2 Sam. xvi. 3. and if there be any Difference between a Thief, and a Lyar, it is this, that the latter is the worſe of the two: For ſo ſays the wiſe Man, *Eccl.* xx. 25. *A Theif is better than a Man that is accuſtomed to Lye, but they both ſhall have deſtruction to heritage.*

(*a*) *A ferarum natura diſcrimihat.* Cic. in Offic. (*b*) *Tollendum eſt in rebus contrahendis omne mendacium.* ibid. l. 3. Offic. p. 126. Lond. 1629. (*c*) *Da mihi mendacem, & ego oſtendam tibi furem.*

X. Again

X. Again, Fourthly, Lying argues a puſillanimous Timorouſneſs, and impotency of Mind, as alſo Diſtruſt, and Diffidence in Almighty God; and therefore Sir *Francis Bacon* takes Notice in his Eſſays, "That *Mountaigny* "ſaid well, when he enquired the Reaſon, (*a*) why the "Word of a Lye ſhould be ſuch a Diſgrace, and ſuch an "odious Charge; becauſe, ſaith he, If it be well weighed, "to ſay that a Man lyeth, is as much as to ſay, That he is "brave towards God, and a Coward towards Men. For a "Lye impudently faces God, and ſhrinks from Man, and "none but an Atheiſt, or Coward will fly to it for Shelter. Fifthly, Lying renders a Man diſagreeable and unlike to that Divine Being, who is called *the God of Truth*, Deut. xxxii. 4. *Pſal.* xxxi. 5. and *who keepeth Truth for evermore*, Pſal. cxlvi. 6. *Pythagoras* being demanded wherein a Man came neareſt to God, anſwered in ſpeaking Truth: And in this certainly, (as well as in other imitable Perfections) it behoves us to be *Followers of God as dear Children*, *Eph.* v. 1. And Laſtly, this Vice, as it renders us unlike to God, ſo doth it make us like to him, *who is a Lyar and the Father of it*, John viii. 44. and that Practice certainly muſt needs be very Wicked, whereby Perſons become Name-ſakes to that grand Enemy of Goodneſs, and Truth, and ſo nearly reſemble the Nature, and Diſpoſition of the Devil himſelf.

XI. In a Word, Lying, as it is *fooliſh and vain*, Prov. x. 18. ſo likewiſe is it ſo very wicked, (*b*) that none ever yet have been ſo daring, and preſumptuous as to appear in its Defence: The Baniſhment of Truth is accounted the firſt Step to the Corruption of good Manners; and *Plutarch* mentions (*c*) one *Epænetus*, who was wont to call Liars the chief Cauſe, and occaſion of all Injuries and Sins. But though every Lye be on ſo many Accounts ſinfull, and blame-worthy; yet thoſe certainly are the worſt, which proceed from Malice, or Vanity; ſuch as directly aim at, and work Miſchief, or ſuch as no manner of Reaſon in the World can be given for. And yet never was any Vice more Epidemical than this; never was it more difficult to find ſuch a Man as holy *David* deſcribes, *Pſal.* xv. 2. that

(*a*) *Sir* Fr Bacon's *Eſſays.* §. 1. p. 5. Lond. 1639. (*b*) *Homines nequiſſimi quibus te onerant mendaciis.* Cic. (*c*) Plut. *Lacon. Apopht.* p. 388. Francof. 1603.

ſpeaketh

ſpeaketh the Truth from his Heart. Many lye out of pure Malice to do others ſome Miſchief; and many to pleaſe thoſe on whom they have ſome Dependance, and are afraid to offend, or diſoblige: Some lye out of Pride (*ſpeaking Lyes in Hypocriſy*, 1 Tim. iv. 2.) to ſet themſelves out, and, as they fooliſhly fanſie, to make themſelves ſhine with the greater Luſtre; and ſome lye out of Fear, to avoid a Danger, hide a Fault, or eſcape a Chiding; and ſome upon no Occaſion, or without any diſcernable Temptation at all.

XII. How properly may the Words of the Pſalmiſt, and Prophet now be made uſe of, *The Faithful fail from among the Children of Men; they ſpeak Vanity every one with his Neighbour, and with a double Heart*, Pſal. xii. 1, 2. *and bend their Tongues like Bows for Lyes*, Jer. ix. 3. In times paſt ſome particular People were noted for this Vice: Thus St. *Paul* tells us, *Tit.* i. 12. The Cretians (*a*) were always accounted Liars: Yea, St. *Paul*'s own Countrymen, the Cilicians are ſaid to have been no better, as appears from that common Proverb (*b*), A Cilician doth not eaſily ſpeak Truth; and *Juvenal* (*c*) gives us Cauſe to ſuſpect, that Lying was as much in Faſhion at *Rome* in his Days, as it is now. So likewiſe Hiſtorians tell us (*d*), That the People of *Ceylon* in the *Eaſt-Indies* are reported to make no Conſcience at all of Lying, nor to account it any Diſgrace at all; and if we may believe ſome of their own Writers (*e*), the French are too much like them. But now I fear the Infection hath ſpread farther, and what *David* ſaid in haſt, may almoſt be ſaid upon ſecond Thoughts, That *all Men are Lyars*, Pſal. cxvi. 11. though it is ſtrange, that what is ſo generally condemn'd, ſhould be ſo commonly practiſed; but above all, that ſome ſhould be ſo unaccountably infatuated as to lye without any Compulſion from others, or Advantage to themſelves; as if, like the unjuſt Judge, *Luke* xviii. 2. *They neither*

(*a*) Κρῆτες ἀεὶ ψεῦσται: *ex Epimenide, Cretizare cum Cretenſibus.* Prov. (*b*) Κίλιξ ὁ ἐμὸς οὐκ ἀληθεύει. (*c*) *Quid Romæ faciam? mentiri neſcio.* Juv. (*d*) Knox's *Relation of* Ceylon. Part III. c. 1. p. 64. Lond. 1681. (*e*) Michael *de* Montaig. Salvianus *of* Marſeilles.

feared

feared God, nor regarded Man, and were without both Conſcience and Shame.

XIII. For in the firſt Place, as to Almighty God, He hath forbid us *to lye one to another,* Lev. xix. 11. and commanded us *to ſpeak every Man the Truth to his Neighbour,* Zech. viii. 16. *Now no Lye is of the Truth,* 1 *John* ii. 21. neither can it be hid, or concealed from the God of Truth, who hath declared not only that he hates, and abhors it, but that he will ſeverely puniſh it too. The Pſamiſt indeed pronounceth that Man bleſſed, who *reſpecteth not the proud, nor ſuch as turn aſide to Lyes,* Pſal. xl. 4. and thoſe Words of the Prophet, *Iſa.* lxiii. 8. *Surely they are my People, Children that will not lye,* ſo he was their Saviour; carry along with them no ordinary Encouragement to follow their Example; but then on the other hand we are told, *Pſal.* v. 6. *That the Lord abhors the deceitful Man; that a lying Tongue,* Prov. vi. 17. *and lying Lips are an Abomination to him,* Prov. xii. 22. which is no wonder at all, if according to the known Maxim, Likeneſs ingenders Love, and Diſſimilitude, Hatred; that to him, who is Truth it ſelf, all Liars are ſo hateful, that he will never Countenance them in the leaſt; nor be reconciled to a Lye, though the end propos'd in telling it ſeem never ſo pious and good: For thoſe that *ſpeak wickedly for God, and even for him talk deceitfully, he will ſurely reprove,* Job xiii. 7, 10. yea, and puniſh alſo.

XIV. *Cicero* (*a*) was of Opinion that the ſame Puniſhments are decreed by God both for Perjury and Lying: I am ſure *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xix. 5. That *a falſe Witneſs ſhall not be unpuniſhed, and he that ſpeaketh Lyes ſhall not eſcape: Gehazi,* no doubt, thought to have come off very well; but how ſoon after his Lying, was the Leproſy of *Naaman* entail'd on him, and his Poſterity, 2 *Kings* v. 27. and the Words were ſcarce out of their Mouths, when *Ananias* and *Sapphira* were, for their Lying and Sacrilege, immediately ſtruck dead, *Acts* v. 5, 10. Yea, if the Sin be more common, the Puniſhment ſhall be more univerſal: *The Lord,* ſaith the Prophet, *Hoſ.* iv. 1, 2, 3. *hath a Controverſy with the Inhabitants of the Land, becauſe*

(*a*) *Et quæ pœna à Diis immortalibus perjurio, hæc mendaci conſtituta eſt,* &c. Cic. 1. Offic. *&* pro Roſc.

there

there is no Truth, nor Mercy, nor Knowledge of God in the Land: By Swearing and Lying, and Killing and Stealing, and committing Adultery, they break out, and Blood toucheth Blood: Therefore ſhall the Land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh, with the Beaſts of the Field, and with the Fowls of Heaven, yea the Fiſhes of the Sea alſo ſhall be taken away. Neither is their Puniſhment confined to this ſide the Grave only; no, the moſt diſmal Part of this Tragical Scene is ſtill behind: For they are to be for ever baniſh'd from the delightful Manſions of Eternal Bliſs, and never to *dwell in God's moſt Holy Hill*, Pſal. xv. 2. into the heavenly *Jeruſalem there ſhall in no wiſe enter, whoſoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lye*, Rev. xxi. 27. every ſuch a one ſhall be ſhut out with *Sorcerers, Whoremongers, Murderers, and Idolaters*, Rev. xxii. 15. and with ſuch Companions all *Liars ſhall have their part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimſtone*, Rev. xxi. 8. So certain is it, That *the mouth that lyeth, ſlayeth the Soul*, Wiſd. i. 11. and a Perſon that *is accuſtomed to lye ſhall have Deſtruction to Heritage*, Eccleſ. xx. 25. That *he that ſpeaketh Lyes ſhall periſh*, Prov. xix. 9. and that all ſuch as *ſpeak leaſing will the Lord deſtroy*, Pſal. v. 6.

XV. In the next place, as to Men, let us conſider the practice of theſe Liars, with reference as well to others, as themſelves. As to others, there is no good and diſcreet Perſon, but doth abhor and deteſt them: *Three ſorts of Men*, ſaith the wiſe Son of *Sirach*, *my Soul hateth, and I am greatly offended at their Life, a poor Man that is Proud, a rich Man that is a Liar, and an old Adulterer than doteth*, Eccleſ. xxv. 2. and the wiſe Son of *David* tells us, in more general Terms, *Prov.* xiii. 5. That *a righteous Man hateth Lying*; that his Royal Father did ſo is apparent, for he tells us plainly, *Pſal.* cxix. 163. That *he did hate and abhor Lying*: As *Eraſmus* alſo tells us concerning himſelf, '(a) 'That he had ſuch an Averſion to Lying, that when he 'was a Boy, he hated thoſe that were addicted to it, and 'in his elder Years, could not ſo much as behold, and

(a) *Ingenium erat ſimplex, adeò abhorrens à mendacio, ut puellus etiam odiſſet pueros mentientes, & ſenex ad illorum aſpectum, etiam corpore, commoveretur.* Eraſm. *in ſua ipſius vitâ, ante Colloq.*

look upon them, without ſome more than ordinary Diſorder and Commotion.

XVI. And then as to the Liars themſelves, we are told, *Eccleſ.* xx. 24, 26. *That a Lye is a foul Blot in a Man; that the Diſpoſition of a Liar is diſhonourable, and that his Shame is ever before him.* Hence the Emperor *Charles* V. ſaid he was no Gentleman, That would take the Lye, becauſe a Liar is by all accounted a Title of ſo great Infamy and Shame, as being of ſo baſe, mean, and ſervile a Temper, that he muſt degenerate very much from all that is laudable and brave to become that, which only to be called, is eſteemed ſo intolerable a Diſgrace, as to be thought worthy of a Stab. For Lying is ſo baſe and mean a Sin, that it is aſhamed even of it ſelf; it is unbecoming a Man of any Spirit or Worth, and therefore an ancient Philoſopher was wont to ſay, That it was the part of Slaves to lye, but of Free-men to ſpeak the Truth: But *Plutarch* will not have it allow'd them neither, where he ſays, (*a*) *To lye indeed is the Property of Slaves, but it is ſo odious a Vice, that it is not fit to be pardon'd, and conniv'd at even in them.* *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xix. 22. That *a poor Man is better than a Liar*; and the Son of *Sirach*, Eccleſ. xx. 24. That *a Lye is continually in the Mouth of the Untaught:* But whether they have Wealth, or Learning or no, 'tis certain ſuch Perſons ought to have a very good Memory; and yet, though they have, they ſeldom fail betraying themſelves ſome time or other. For though *the Lip of Truth be eſtabliſhed for ever*, Prov. xii. 19. *yet a lying Tongue is but for a Moment*; it cannot long deceive, by reaſon of that (*b*) incoherence in what it utters: And whoſoever think to hide their Nakedneſs by ſowing together ſuch brittle Figleaves will ſoon find themſelves miſtaken; their Folly will quickly be made manifeſt, and then all they will get, will be only this, Not to be believed when they ſpeak Truth: For all will be ready to ſay with the Son of *Sirach*, Eccleſ. xxxiv. 4. *Of an unclean thing, what can be cleanſed, and from that which is falſe, what Truth can come?* And

(*a*) *Mentiri ſervile eſt, dignúmq; apud omnes homines odio, ac ne mediocribus quidem ſervis ignoſcendum.* Plut. *de Liber. educand.* p. 15. Francof. 1603. (*b*) *Hoc eſt mendaciorum natura ut cohærere non poſſint.* *Lactant.* l. 5. c. 3.

thus

thus we ſee how, as the Pſalmiſt affirms, *the Mouth of them that ſpeak lyes ſhall be ſtopped*, Pſal. lxiii. 11. and what Dangers and Inconveniencies they, in the mean time, run themſelves into.

XVII. But if it be objected, That we find in Holy Writ ſeveral good and godly Perſons, as *Abraham*, Gen. xii. 13. xx. 2. *Sarah*, Gen. xviii. 15. *Iſaac*, Gen. xxvi. 7. *Jacob*, Gen. xxvii. 19. 24. *Rachael*, Gen. xxxi. 35. *Sampſon*, Judg. xvi. 13, *&c.* and St. *Peter*, Mat. xxvi. 17, *&c.* to have been guilty of this Sin; it may be anſwered, That ſuch Examples are recorded for our Caution, and not our Imitation: Though ſome endeavour to excuſe *Abraham*'s ſaying his Wife was his Siſter, by ſaying, as he does himſelf, *Gen.* xx. 12. Indeed ſhe was his Siſter, *the Daughter of his Father*, tho not the Daughter of his Mother, *and ſhe became his Wife*; and tells us, That Concealments are not unlawful, if there be a reaſonable Cauſe, and if it be not neceſſary for us to reveal the Thing concealed: And thus *Abraham* did ſpeak the Truth in part, when he called *Sarah* his Siſter, and concealed it in part, not confeſſing her to be his Wife; and as it is to be ſuppoſed, and hop'd, that the reſt repented of their tranſgreſſing in this manner, ſo we are aſſured by the Evangeliſt, *Mat.* xxvi. 75. That St. *Peter wept bitterly for his ſo doing*; and ever after became a moſt diligent, and ſucceſsful Apoſtle.

XVIII. For *Lying* is a Vice ſo apparently evil, and ſo generally condemn'd by all that have either Vertue or good Breeding, That they muſt be very bad indeed who endeavour not all they can to avoid it, and when they do offend in this manner are not heartily ſorry for it. *O ye Sons of Men*, ſays *David*, *how long will ye love Vanity, and ſeek after leaſing?* Pſal. iv. 2. *Lye not one to another*, ſays Saint *Paul*, Col. iii. 9. *But putting away Lying ſpeak every Man Truth with his Neighbour*, Eph. iv. 25. and *lye not againſt the Truth*, ſaith St. *James*, *Jam.* iii. 14. So likewiſe doth the wiſe Man exhort, *Eccleſ.* vii. 12, 13. Not *to deviſe a Lye againſt thy Brother, neither to do the like to thy Friend*: Yea *not to uſe any manner of Lye, becauſe the Cuſtom thereof is not good*: And *Homer* brings in one, giving this Advice to King *Agamemnon* (*a*) himſelf, *Lye not, ſince you*

(*a*) Μὴ Ψεῦδ' ἐπιστάμενος σαφὰ εἰπεῖν, Homer. *Il.* Δ. *v.* 404.

know how to ſpeak Truth, for the doing ſo is very unbecoming great Perſons, as well as others: Excellent Speech, ſaith *Solomon, becometh not a Fool, much leſs do lying Lips a Prince,* Prov. xvii. 7. and therefore thoſe that are *Judges of the Earth, are exhorted to love Righteouſneſs,* Wiſd. i. 1. Holy *David* would not ſuffer a Liar to be about his Court, *Pſal.* ci. 7. *He that worketh deceit,* ſays he, *ſhall not dwell within mine Houſe, he that telleth Lyes ſhall not tarry in my Sight*; which *Pſalm* Biſhop *Ridley* had daily (*a*) read in his Family, and learned by Heart; but the beſt way to prevent this evil Practice in them is not to ſet them a bad Example themſelves: For *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xxix. 12. *If a Ruler hearken to Lyes, then all his Servants will be Wicked*; and *as the Judge of the People is himſelf,* ſaith the Son of *Sirach, ſo are his Officers, and what manner of Man, the Ruler of the City is, ſuch are they that dwell therein,* Eccleſiaſticus x. 2.

XIX. It is reported of Pope *Alexander* the Vth. That he never did what he ſaid, but would lye at any time for his own ends; but notwithſtanding his pretended Infallibility, it is evident from what hath been ſaid, That it is not lawful on any account ſo to do; and however ſome may be ſo deluded as *to believe Lyes,* 2 Theſſ. ii. 11. and others ſo wicked as *to delight in them,* Pſal. lxii. 4. yea as to *bend their own Tongues, like their Bow for Lyes,* Jer. ix. 3. either to deceive others, like that lying Prophet, 1 *King* xiii. 18. or to hide and conceal their own Faults, like *Joſeph*'s Miſtreſs, *Gen.* xxxix. 14. or to obtain their Ends or Deſires, like one of thoſe Harlots, that came to *Solomon* about *the dead and the living Child,* 1 Kings iii. 22. However, *the wicked are eſtranged from the Womb, and go aſtray as ſoon as they be born, ſpeaking Lyes,* Pſal. lviii. 3. yet *a righteous Man hateth Lying,* Prov. xiii. 5. and will neither uſe it himſelf, nor countenance it in others; *Remove from me the way of Lying,* was part of the Royal Pſalmiſt's Prayer, *Pſal.* cxix. 29. and *remove from me Vanity and Lyes,* part of *Agurs* Supplication to Almighty God, *Prov.* xxx. 8. Thus alſo it is ſaid of St. *Chryſoſtome,* (*b*) That he was never known to Lye; and Hiſtorians relate the ſame concerning

(*a*) *Dr.* Bell's *Sermon on* Joſh. xxiv. 15. Lond. 1672. p. 13.
(*b*) *Nunquam eum mentitum fuiſſe.* Sophronius.

Ariſtides

Ariſtides and *Epaminondas*, Men of great Renown, the firſt at *Athens*, and the other at *Thebes*; and of *Pomponius Atticus*, it is declared by *Cornelius Nepos*, That he never told Lye himſelf, nor could endure it in others. And happy are all thoſe that are of the like Diſpoſition, which doth ſo very much conduce toward making their Lives eaſie here, and themſelves for ever bleſſed in the World to come: Whilſt on the other hand, what *Solomon* ſays of the *Bread of Deceit*, Prov. xx. 17. may be very well ſaid of ſuch Words of Deceit too, though *they are ſweet to a Man, yet afterwards his Mouth ſhall be filled with Gravel.* Let all therefore beware of Lying themſelves, or encouraging it in others; and eſpecially let thoſe who have the care and charge of Youth committed to them, ſtrive with all imaginable Diligence to ſtop the Progreſs of this Vice, and ſtifle it, if poſſible, in the very Cradle; and frequently incultate that Saying of Mr. *Herbert*,

(a) *Dare to be true, nothing can need a Lye,*
A Fault which needs it moſt, grows two thereby.

XX. Laſtly, becauſe St. *Paul* doth ſo expreſly condemn *ſpeaking Lyes in hypocriſie*, 1 Tim. iv. 2. I cannot but be of Opinion, That we are not to uſe any Equivocation, with an intent to deceive; where we muſt underſtand, That Equivocation is twofold: Firſt, Logical, which is an ambiguous way of ſpeaking, when a Word admits of diverſe Significations; or when diverſe Words, that ſignifie one Thing, by reaſon of their Placing or Conſtruction, ſeem to ſignifie variouſly. This latter is more properly called Amphibologia, as the other is Equivocation; this being a different, and doubtful Signification of a Sentence, as that is of a Word. Now theſe Logical, or Verbal Equivocations, (if I may ſo call them) if they be not too Hyperbolical, nor produced upon any ill Deſign, ſeem (and are generally thought) not to be wholly, and altogether unlawful, ſince we find them uſed by our Saviour himſelf, *Mat.* ix. 24. *John* xi. 11. *John* ii. 19. but that other (though more improper) kind of Equivocation, which uſually goes

(a) *Mr.* George Herbert's *Temple, or Sacred Poems*, p. 3. Lond. 1695.

by the Name of Mental or Jeſuitical, when we ſpeak not the whole Sentence, but out of a Deſign to deceive others, reſerve part of it in our Mind, which mental Reſervation deſtroys the Truth, and alters the Sence and Meaning of what we ſpeak: Such Equivocating is altogether unlawful, as being no better than plain Lying; and to allow of the ſame, is to encourage and patronize the uttering Falſhood.

XXI. For if a Man may tacitly reſerve what he will in his Mind, there is norhing ſo falſe, but what may well enough be freed from the Imputation of a Lye; whatſoever we think, ſee, do, or determine, when asked concerning the ſame, we may ſay, We never thought, ſaw, did, or determined it, *viz.* with an intent to divulge it, or the like; And what Commerce or Correſpondence can there be in the World, if ſuch Tricks as theſe be lawful? Or how can I believe what any Man ſays, or know when any ſpeaks true, if it be lawful for Perſons to affirm, and ſwear what they know to be falſe, and thus to reſerve ſomething in their Mind, quite different from what they utter or expreſs? 'Tis true indeed, he is not to be condemn'd as a Liar, (*a*) who ſpeaks that which is falſe, when he thinks the ſame to be true, and there is no deſign or intent to deceive the Hearer; but when a Man affirms that to be true, which he thinks or knows to be otherwiſe, he becomes no doubt a Tranſgreſſor of the Law; becauſe the firſt ſpeaks for want of Knowledge, but the latter ſpeaks falſly againſt his Knowledge, and ſo becomes properly a Liar: For ſo ſaith *Aquinas*, (*b*) He is properly ſaid to Lye, who by Words doth outwardly ſignifie ſomething that is contrary to what he thinks in his Mind; which when I conſider, I cannot but wonder at the Boldneſs of thoſe of the Church of *Rome*, who teach, That if a Catholick be demanded whether or no a Prieſt be in the Houſe, altho' he know, or think there is one, yet he may ſafely anſwer there is none, with this, or the like ſecret Reſervation in his Mind, that I deſign to diſcover: For ſuch Equivocating doth plainly appear to be no better than Lying, becauſe we ſpeak con-

(*a*) *Nemo mentiens judicandus eſt, qui dicit falſum, quod putat eſſe verum*, &c. Auguſt. *Enchir.* c. 18. (*b*) Aquin. 2a, 2æ. qu. iii. art. 1.

trary

trary to what we know or think: As alſo becauſe it agrees with the other part of the Diſtinction of a Lye, that it is ſpoke with a Deſign to deceive: For ſo ſaith St. *Auguſtine*, (a) No Man can doubt but he lyeth, that ſpeaks any thing which is falſe with an intent to deceive another; yea, one of their own Jeſuits hath affirmed, (b) That whoſoever doth endeavour by feigning any thing to deceive another, although he may pretend to ſignifie ſomething elſe, yet without doubt he lyeth.

XXII. For if, as is generally agreed, (c) Words and Writings were found out, and ordained not to intangle, and make more intricate, but to diſcover, and explain our Mind and Meaning: Then, as Idols in viſible Forms made to expreſs the eſſential Form of the inviſible and incomprehenſible God, are called in Scripture *Lying Vanities*, Hab. ii. 18. Jer. x. 8. 14. ſo thoſe Signs or Inſtruments, which being intended to declare the Truth of any Propoſition, are made uſe of cntrary to the Signification of the ſame, are Lying Signs: And tho' I ſay not that ambiguous Words may never be made uſe of in common Speech, yet I cannot but condemn that pernicious and deceitful Equivocation, which is commonly called Jeſuitical, from the Patrons and Practiſers of the ſame; therein following the Steps of that noted Heretick *Arius*, who being compelled by the Emperor *Conſtantine*, to deliver his Subſcription to the Council of *Nice*, and confirm his Integrity by an Oath, uſed this Device: His own Heretical Opinion he kept cloſe under (d) his Left-arm, and then laying his Hand on his Left-ſide, he ſwore he Believed as he had Written. Yea, they may be ſaid herein to follow the Example, not only of the worſt of Men, but of the grand Profeſſor of ſuch deſtructive Arts, Satan himſelf, who as he is called the *Father of Lyes*, John viii. 44. ſo certainly hath he ſet Patterns for ſuch Equivocators to follow.

XXIII. Thus for Inſtance, ſome being conſulted whether or no, it were lawful to Murher a King of this (e) Nation, returned an Anſwer, (f) which might be inter-

(a) Auguſt. *de mendac.* c. 4. (b) Maldonat. *Jeſ. Com. in Luc. ult.* v. 28. (c) Cic. *pro A. Cæcin.* (d) Socrat. *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* l. 1. c. 38. (e) Edw. *II.* 5. (f) Edwardum *occidere nolito timere bonum eſt.*

preted Two ſeveral ways, either thus, *Fear not to kill the King, it is a good Thing ſo to do*: or thus, *Murder not the King, for it is good to fear, and ſtand in awe*: So that thoſe crafty Foxes both perſwaded what they would have done; and yet (if they had been queſtioned for the ſame) reſerved this Hole to creep out at, That their Words ſignified the quite contrary. And how well herein did thoſe Murderers imitate him, who was a Murderer and a Liar from the beginning, and from whoſe deluding Oracles many ſuch doubtful, and ambiguous Fallacies did proceed? Thus when *Pyrrhus*, King of *Epirus*, was about to make War againſt the *Romans*, *Apollo* being conſulted, Whether or no it were beſt for him ſo to do, returned an Anſwer, (*a*) which ſignified, Either that he ſhould conquer the *Romans*, or that they ſhould get the better of him: Whereupon, that Prince (like the generality of Mankind) expounding what was thus doubtful in his own Sence, and that which favoured him moſt, and he liked beſt, ventured to wage War with the *Romans*, by whom he was ſlain. Yea, Pope *Silveſter* II. himſelf, for all his Familiarity with Satan, (*b*) and his Infallibility too, was thus deceived by him: For it is reported, That when he conſulted the Devil how long he ſhould be Pope, the Anſwer he received was, Until he ſhould celebrate Maſs in *Jeruſalem*; at this the Pope was exceeding glad, not queſtioning but that he ſhould wear the Triple Crown for many Years: For he was reſolved never to go to *Jeruſalem*, and then he thought he ſhould be ſafe. But, alas! being *ignorant of his Devices, he let Satan get the Advantage over him*, 2 Cor. ii. 11. for in the Fourth Year of his Pontificate, he accidently went to Maſs in a Church at *Rome*, that was dedicated to, and took its Name from the Croſs in *Jeruſalem*, which when he underſtood, he perceived Satan's Deceit, and miſtruſted his Death to be near at hand, as indeed it was, for he died ſoon after.

XXIV. In ſhort, ſpeaking Truth is a common Debt we owe to all Mankind; and however the ſame may be ſometimes concealed by a diſcreat Silence, yet it muſt never be croſſed by Denials or Equivocations: For therefore

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(*a*) *Aio te Æacida Romanos vincere poſſe.* (*b*) Platina *de vit. Pontif.* p. 160. *de* Silv. IIo. Colon. 1568.

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were Tongues given us, that we might thereby the better expreſs our Meaning, and declare our Minds to one another, and ſpeak no otherwiſe with our Mouths, than we think with our Hearts, as that excellent Vertue of Veracity doth direct. Man, ſaith *Ariſtotle*, is our Friend, and Truth our Friend, but above all we ought to honour Truth: For, as a great Perſon (*a*) hath well obſerved, "Clear, and round Dealing is the Honour of Man's Na-"ture, and every Mixture of Falſhood is like allay in "Coin of Gold or Silver, which may make the Metal to "work the better perhaps, but then it doth embaſe it: And indeed, there is ſomething ſo ſatisfactory in Truth, and a plain, downright, honeſt Carriage, as far ſurpaſſes all Artifice and Diſſimulation, and makes it every where to be reſpected: And though a Man may ſometimes happen with St. *Paul* to be accounted *an Enemy*, Gal. iv. 16. or with the Prophet *Micaiah* to be unjuſtly *hated for ſpeaking unacceptable* (*b*) *Truths*, 1 King. xxii. 8. ye he will never be undervalued or deſpiſed on that Account.

XXV. And becauſe Truth and Fidelity is required in what we promiſe, as well as in what we otherwiſe affirm: Therefore with theſe Liars and Equivocators, we may likewiſe join ſuch as either at the time of making a Promiſe, have no real purpoſe or deſign to perform it; or do not afterwards make it good, when it may be uſeful and proper, and they are able ſo to do. *Grotius* makes (*c*) Three things neceſſary towards making a Promiſe binding and obliging: I. That the Perſon who makes the Promiſe be fit and able to make ſuch an Engagement, and therefore the Promiſes of Infants, or Perſons that are mad and diſtracted, or any that have not the right uſe of their Reaſon and Underſtanding, ſeems not to be obligatory. II. The Second Condition requiſite is, That the Thing promiſed be not impoſſible, nor unlawful to be performed: If a Man promiſe to drink up the Sea, or to fly up to Heaven; no Perſon, I ſuppoſe, will expect him to be as good as his Word; nor if he promiſe to break open a Houſe, or cut his Neighbour's Throat; for whatſoever is unlawful to be done, it is

(*a*) *Eſſays of* Fr. *Lord* Verulam, *&c.* Lond. 1639. §. 1. p. 5. (*b*) *Veritas odium parit.* Ter. *in Andr.* Act. 1. Sc. 1. (*c*) Hug. Grotius *Annot. in* Mat. v. 37. *Ut jure Naturæ*, &c.

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alſo unlawful to promiſe. III. The Third and laſt Thing required is, That it be in the Power, or Diſpoſal of him that makes the Promiſe, to fulfil the ſame; for a Servant who hath already intended to ſerve one certain Maſter, during ſo long a Time, is not at his own Liberty, without that Maſter's Conſent to ſerve another, altho' he promiſe never ſo much ſo to do.

XXVI. To all this *Cicero* adds, (*a*) That the Utility, or Uſefulneſs of a Promiſe, is likewiſe to be conſidered; and that thoſe are not to be kept, which, if performed, will more prejudice the Perſon that makes them, than profit the Perſon to whom they are made, (but then I ſuppoſe the former muſt firſt crave leave of the latter, to be freed from thoſe Promiſes which he finds to be ſo prejudicial to himſelf, and then Liberty being granted, he may lawfully take it; otherwiſe he is not to *change, though he promiſe, or ſwear to his own hurt*, Pſal. xv. 4.) neither will he have ſuch Promiſes to be kept as are hurtful to thoſe (*b*) to whom they are made. The ſame Eloquent Orator tells us likewiſe, That thoſe Promiſes are not binding, (*c*) which a Man is forced to make out of fear, or inveigled to make by ſome Trick or Deceit; but what he elſewhere affirms, (*d*) That a Promiſe is rather to be broke, than any wicked Thing to be committed, is certainly true: And I believe all will agree, That *Herod* ſhould rather have been worſe than his Word, than meerly for his Promiſe ſake to have *murthered St.* John Baptiſt, *Mat.* xiv. 9. Neither is a Man to be blamed, if he be incapacitated, or prevented by Death, or any like Means: And therefore all Promiſes ought to be made with this Condition, *If the Lord will, and we ſhall live, we will do this, or that*, James iv. 15.

XXVII. For otherwiſe, a Man's lawful Word and Promiſe bindeth him according to the Will and Pleaſure of him, to whom it is made; a Promiſe is a juſt Debt, which every one is obliged to pay; it is a common Proverb indeed, that great Men make Promiſes, and mean Men keep them: But as King *Francis* the Firſt was wont to ſay, "That if Faith were baniſhed out of the World, "it ſhould be found in his Word;" ſo ought the greateſt

(*a*) Cic. *Offi.* l. 1. p. 16. Lond. 1629. (*b*) Cic. *ibid.* l. 3. p. 138. (*c*) Cic. *Offi.* l. 1. p. 16. (*d*) Cic. *ibid.* l. 3. p. 139.

Perſons

Perſons to be as exact in the performance of their Promiſes as others: Like *Joſhua*, who punctually performed all that was promiſed *Rahab* by the Spies, *Joſh.* ii. 14. and vi. 25. Yea, like God himſelf, the great King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, all whoſe Promiſes are *Yea*, and *Amen*, 2 Cor. i. 20. What the Poet long ſince obſerved (*a*), That it is eaſy for a man to promiſe much, is indeed very true; but then, as he ought to be accounted an honeſt Man, who performs what he Promiſes; ſo he will be eſteemed the moſt prudent and wiſe, who promiſes no more than he can fulfill; and therefore, becauſe haſty Promiſes are commonly followed with ſpeedy Repentance, the Advice one gave was this, "To think an Hour before we ſpeak, "and to conſider a Day before we promiſe."

XXVIII. Again, becauſe the divulging, or revealing of Secrets committed or imparted to one, who promiſed to conceal them, is an Offence or (*b*) Fault of the like Nature with thoſe laſt mentioned, we ſhall take Notice of it here. *Iſocrates* (*c*) adviſeth *Demonicus* to keep all ſuch Secrets with greater Care, and Fidelity than any other Treaſure: And *Plutarch* tells us (*d*), That *Alexander* the Great having received a Letter from his Mother, wherein were contained, among other Secrets, certain Things that were laid to *Antipater*'s Charge, and having read the Letter, whilſt his dear Friend *Hephæſtion* (as he was wont to do) did look over; as ſoon as he had done, he took his Signet from his Finger, and put it to *Hephæſtion*'s Mouth, thereby ſealing it up, as it were, and engaging him, not to divulge what he had read; and as the wiſe Son of *Sirach* adviſeth, *Whether it be to Friend or Foe, not to talk of other Mens Lives, and if thou canſt without Offence, not to reveal them*, Eccluſ. xix. 8. ſo the wiſe King of *Iſrael* exhorts, *Prov.* xxv. 9. not to diſcover to any one the Secret of another. But alaſs! how common now is the contrary Practice? *Ariſtotle* is ſaid to have made it (*e*) one of the

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(*a*) *Pollicitis dives quilibet eſſe poteſt.* Ov. 1. Art. Amand. (*b*) *Gravis eſt culpa, tacenda loqui*, Ov. ib. l. 2. (*c*) Noc. ad Demonic. (*d*) *Epiſtolam quandam*, &c. Plutar. *Apoph. inter op. mor.* p. 333. Francof. 1603. (*e*) *Ladies Calling*, Part I. Sect. I. §. 13. p. 11. *and* Stanley's *Hiſt. of Philoſophy*, Part IV. p. 145. Lond. 1687.

three

three Things he ſolemnly repented of, That he had ever truſted a Secret with a Woman; and *Eraſmus* reports (*a*) the ſame of *Cato* the Elder, but this Breach of Faith is now too too often no leſs viſible in Men, than in Women, and both Sexes afford too many Examples of ſuch treacherous Babblers.

XXIX. *Terence* in one of his Plays, (*b*) brings in *Parmeno*, tho' otherwiſe a good Servant, yet to have been very ſubject to this Fault: He was ſtill diving into other Perſons concerns, and mighty deſirous to know every Thing but could conceal Nothing; which ſhewed that he had not much Wit: For we are told, *Prov.* xi. 12, 13. That *a Man of Underſtanding holdeth his Peace; and he that is of a faithfull Spirit concealeth a Matter; whilſt a Fool travelleth with a Word, as a Woman in Labour of a Child; and as an Arrow that ſticketh in a Man's Thigh, ſo is a Word in a Fool's Belly*, Eccluſ. xix. 11, 12. and as this Practice is fooliſh, ſo likewiſe very often of pernicious Conſequence; hence we are told there, *v.* 6. *That he that can rule his Tongue, ſhall live without Strife, and he that hateth Babbling, ſhall have leſs Evil*; and we have given us this wholeſome Advice, *v.* 17. *Rehearſe not unto another that which is told unto thee, and thou ſhalt fare never the worſe: Neither diſcover a Secret to another; leſt he that heareth thee, put thee to Shame, and thine Infamy turn not away*, Prov. xxv. 9, 10. *for he hath heard, and obſerved thee, and when time cometh he will hate thee*, Eccluſ. xix. 9.

XXX. *Horace* (*c*) ranks ſuch as cannot conceal what Secrets are committed to them, among thoſe naughty and dangerous Perſons he would have by all means to be avoided: For they are a ſort of Traitors to common Society, and do a great deal of Miſchief, when they need not. For notwithſtanding *Ariſtotle* is ſaid to have been of Opinion (*d*), that the moſt difficult Thing was, To Conceal, and keep cloſe thoſe Things that were not to be divulged: Yet certainly a Secret is no ſuch unruly and ungovernable Thing, but that it may be kept in, and that without any Danger at all: If, ſays the wiſe Man, thou haſt heard a Word, let it die with thee, and be bold, it will not burſt

(*a*) Eraſm. *de Lingua*, p. 84. Baſil. 1525. (*b*) *In Hecyra.* (*c*) Horat. *Serm.* l. 1. Sat. 4. (*d*) Diog. Laert.

thee.

thee. I muſt confeſs indeed, that as when King (*a*) *Lyſimachus* demanded of *Philippides* the Comedian, what he ſhould give, or communicate unto him? he anſwered, "What your Majeſty pleaſe, provided it be not a Secret." So I ſhould never be deſirous of having the Secrets of others (of great Perſonages eſpecially) committed to my Truſt, it being a Charge ſo full of Inconvenience (*b*); but having once took it upon me, I would religiouſly keep it. To all which, I ſhall only add, That as Prudence directs a Man ſo to behave himſelf towards his Friend, as if he might afterwards prove his Enemy; ſo, when the League of Friendſhip is broken, and two Friends do part; the Cabinet of Secrets is not preſently to be unlock'd, and they ſent to fly about, like Birds let looſe from a Cage; but they ought carefully to lock up one anothers Secrets, and interchange the Keys; otherwiſe, when the War is once declared, there will be enough lie ready to blow up the Fire, and of old Friends make the moſt bitter Enemies.

XXXI. Nothing now remains, with relation to this Part of this Treatiſe, but that having ſeen the Folly and Wickedneſs of bearing falſe Witneſs, and Slandering, of Detraction, Cenſoriouſneſs, and Deriſion; of Contumely, Curſing, and Brawling; of Diſſimulation, Flattery, and Lying, we make our humble Addreſſes to the Eternal God of Truth, that he would be graciouſly pleaſed ſo to guide us by his Bleſſed Spirit, that we may be tender and charitable in ſupporting and maintaining what we can, the Credit and Reputation of all Men; that he would keep us from the dangerous Sins of Perjury, and falſly accuſing any; and make us unwilling to hunt after, and liſten to any Rumour that tends to our Neighbour's Defamation, or haſtily to believe, or report any Thing to his Prejudice and Diſadvantage: That we may carefully avoid all baſe and malicious Whiſpering, Tale-bearing and Backbiting; all ſly and injurious Inſinuations; and ceaſing to be pragmatical, and cenſorious in the Affairs of others, may ſtudy to be quiet, and do our own Buſi-

(*a*) **Plutarch** *Apophth. inter oper. mor.* p. 337, 338. Francof. 1603. (*b*) *Arcanum neque tu ſcrutaberis ullius unquam, Commiſſúmq; teges, & vino tortus, & irâ.* **Horat.** l. 1. *Epiſt.*

neſs;

neſs; that we may be always willing to ſpeak, hear and judge the beſt of them; and be carefull to pull the Beam out of our own Eyes, before we find fault with the Mote in anothers; that the Tenderneſs and Regard we owe to our Fellow-Chriſtians, may ſink ſo deep into our Souls, as to hinder us from ſcoffing at their Calamities, or Infirmities, or deriding even their very Sins; or from curſing or reproaching them upon any Account whatſoever; and in ſhort, that being free from all Flattery, and Diſſimulation, we may abhor all manner of Lying, and avoid all Appearances of Evil, through Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord. *Amen.*

PART. III. SECT. I.

I. HAving already conſidered the moſt common, and moſt material Faults, and Offences of an Unbridled Tongue, as they have relation to God, and our Neighbour; we come now in the Third and Laſt Place to take a View of thoſe which reflect upon a Man's ſelf, in the Front of which I ſhall place,

II. *Loquacity*, *Talkativeneſs*, *Garrulity*, or *Vain-babling*, which Monopolizing of Diſcourſe, by thoſe who are deſirous to ſpeak all, and unwilling to hear any Body elſe; ſome make a ſign of Arrogance and Pride; ſome of Rudeneſs and Immodeſty; and others of a ſort of Covetouſneſs, whilſt by ingroſſing all the Talk to themſelves, they defraud the reſt of the Company of their Share; but however it is certain, this Fiſtula of the Mind, as one (*a*) calls it (becauſe it is ever running, and ſo difficult to be cured) this commanding Silence, as it were, among all that are preſent; and magiſterial and dogmatical dictating to them, as if they were only their Scholars, or Pupils, and not able to ſpeak of themſelves, is ſuch an unbecoming Inſolence, ſo great an Indecency in Converſation, and ſo rude an impoſing upon the Company, that to uſe the Words of *Zophar*, Job xi. 2. *Perſons ſo full of Talk can never be juſtified*; and therefore that Divine

(*a*) Feltham's *Reſolves*: Cen. 1. § 93. p. 291. ed. 7. Lon. 1647.

Poet

Poet Mr. *Herbert* gives this Advice (*a*), "Spend not all "That thou canſt ſpeak at once, but Husband it: And "give Men Turns of Speech; for ſays he, A civil Gueſt "will no more talk all, than eat all the Feaſt."

III. *Arceſilaus* (*b*) ſaid of one, who talked loudly, and impertinently, that he had a peeviſh Nurſe: This he ſpoke by way of Jeſt: However, the Nurſes that cheriſh, and maintain this Vice, or the corrupt Springs from whence it uſually flows are Idleneſs, and Inquiſitiveneſs, Folly, Inadvertency, &c. from whence it appears that ſuch Engroſſers of Diſcourſe, who are always babbling whatſoever comes uppermoſt: *Whoſe Bellies*, to uſe the Words of *Elihu*, Job xxxii. 19, 20. *are as Wine, which hath no vent, and ready to burſt like new Bottles; till they ſpeak, and open their Lips that they may be refreſhed*: Such Drums of the Company, have no Reaſon at all to pride themſelves in the Volubility of an Unbridled Tongue; becauſe as empty Veſſels make the greateſt ſound, ſo the greateſt Babblers are commonly Perſons of the leaſt Wit; and may very well be compared to that *ſounding Braſs*, and thoſe *tinckling Cymbals* the Apoſtle mentions, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 1. which made a great hideous Noiſe indeed, but without any Uſe or Pleaſantneſs at all. For Modeſty in Diſcourſe is ſo agreeable, and becoming, that all the Rules of Rhetorick or Oratory cannot help Men to an Ornament more embelliſhing and graceful: *Juſtin*, ſpeaking of the Spaniards in former Ages, ſays (*c*), They preferr'd the Care of Bridling their Tongues, before that of their very Lives; and *Socrates*, among thoſe many excellent Precepts which he gave for the Government of the Tongue, adviſeth chiefly, To be a lover (*d*) of Hearing more than a lover of Speaking: As the Apoſtle St. *James* exhorts every Man *to be ſwift to hear, and ſlow to ſpeak*, Jam. i. 19. or as a Poet of our own Nation (*e*) expreſſeth himſelf,

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(*a*) *Mr.* Herbert's *Temple, or ſacred Poems*, p. 11. Lon. 1695. (*b*) Stanley's *Hiſt. of Philoſophy*, P. V. p. 219. Lond. 1687. fol. ed. 2. (*c*) *Illis fortior taciturnitatis cura, quàm vitæ celebratur.* Juſt. l. 44. p. 231. Lond. 1678. (*d*) Φιλήκοον εἶναι, μᾶλλον ἢ Φιλόλαλον. Stob. (*e*) Randolph.

Hear

Hear much, but little ſpeak; a wiſe Man fears,
And will not uſe his Tongue, ſo much as Ears.

IV. And indeed, the Reaſon that is generally (*d*) given, why we have aſſign'd us by Nature two Ears, and but one Tongue, is, That we ſhould hear much, and ſpeak little; or at leaſt, that we ſhould hear twice as much as we ſpeak; yea, to ſhew how backward and averſe Nature is from encouraging, or promoting Loquacity, or vain Babbling; as ſhe hath given Man two Eyes, and two Ears for one Tongue, ſo in many, even that is ſo tied at firſt, that the String is forced to be cut, before they can ſpeak plain; and if that Compariſon ſome have made be allowed, as if the Eyes and Ears were the Receivers, the Mind the Treaſurer, and the Tongue the Steward; then without doubt, if the Steward diſburſeth more, or as much as is brought in, there is like to be but a very poor Treaſury. *Virgil* (*b*) therefore would have all to hold their Peace, unleſs when either their Silence may hurt or prejudice; or when their ſpeaking may profit, or do good to others; which to know exactly, as it requires ſome Judgment and Conſideration; ſo the doing ſo muſt needs be acknowledged to be Excellent, and Praiſe-worthy.

V. So that perhaps the ſafeſt and wiſeſt Way may be to ſpeak little, and think the more; for I believe many have had Reaſon enough to make uſe of the ſaying, which ſome (*c*) aſcribe to *Simonides*, and others (*d*) to *Xenocrates*, "That he had ſometimes repented of Speaking, but "never of holding his Peace." The better to prevent which, that learned Philoſopher, and profeſſed Enemy to Tatling, *Pythagoras*, enjoined his Scholars a Quinquennial, or five Years Silence, before ever he admitted them to his myſterious Philoſophy: He firſt taught them to unlearn to ſpeak, and hold their Peace; and his principal Direction in order to the procuring Wiſdom was to

(*a*) Demoſthenes, & Zeno *in* Laert. Plutarch. *op. mor.* p. 132. Francof. 1603. (*b*) Vit. Virg. *ante opera.* (*c*) Eraſm. (*d*) Laert. l. 4. c. 2. Valer. Max. l. 7. c. 2. p. 227, 228. Amſtelod. 1650.

Bridle their Tongue; not that he forbad Speech altogether, but only too much of it: He would have his Diſciples ſpeak but ſeldom, and when they did, he required they ſhould do it with all imaginable Modeſty and Submiſſion; and for this their Silence, we find they continued in great Honour, even to *Iſocrates*'s time, who tells us (*a*), That Men more admired the Pythagoreans, who held their Peace, than others who had obtained the greateſt Glory by ſpeaking. And indeed, that Silence is the firſt Step to Wiſdom, appears not only from the Words of *Job* to his Friends; *Job* xiii. 5. *O that you would altogether hold your Peace, and it would be your Wiſdom*; or you would not ſo fooliſhly diſcover the Vanity of your Hearts; but alſo from that Saying of *Solomon*, Prov. xvii. 27, 28. *He that hath Knowledge ſpareth his Words, and a Man of Underſtanding is of an excellent Spirit: Even a Fool, when he holdeth his Peace is counted wiſe, and he that ſhutteth his Lips is eſteemed a Man of Underſtanding*: Where he plainly intimates, how ſure a Sign it is of more than ordinary Wiſdom for a Man to Bridle his Tongue, as it is a Sign thoſe Waters are deepeſt, which make (*b*) the leaſt Noiſe as they run by. Such a Man by his Silence hath this Advantage, That he can take notice of, and obſerve the Follies and Imperfections of others, whilſt in the mean time he conceals his own; and then, if that common Saying hold good, He that ſpeaks ſows, and he that holds his Peace, gathers; it is eaſy to diſcern what an Advantage the latter has over the other: Nor is it any Wonder at all, that *Homer* makes all the wiſeſt Heroes and Commanders among thoſe Grecians, that went to the Siege of *Troy*, to have been ſlow of Speech; but *Therſites*, whom he brings as the veryeſt Fool, and greateſt Scoundrel in the whole Army, he makes to be a great Babbler.

VI. In like manner *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xv. 2. That *the Tongue of the wiſe uſeth Knowledge aright, but the Mouth of Fools, poureth out Fooliſhneſs: That a prudent Man concealeth Knowledge, but the Heart of Fools proclaimeth*

(*a*) Iſocra. *in his Buſiris, according to Mr.* Theoph. Gale *in his Court of the Gentiles*, P. II. l. 2. c. 6. §. 4. p. 140. Oxon. 1671. (*b*) *Qua flumen placidum eſt, forſan latet altius unda.* Cato.

Fooliſhneſs, Prov. xii. 23. and *he layeth open his Folly thereby*, Prov. xiii. 16. that *a Fool uttereth all his Mind, but a wiſe Man keepeth it in till afterwards*, Prov. xxix. 11. and that *Wiſdom reſteth in the Heart of him that hath Underſtanding, but that which is in the midſt of Fools is made known*; which calls to Mind the Saying of *Demaratus*, Prince of the Lacedæmonians, who being ſilent at a certain Meeting, and asked Whether that his Silence did ariſe from want of Matter for Diſcourſe; or from Fooliſhneſs and Simplicity, returned this Anſwer *(a)*, "That a Fool could "not hold his Peace." It is *the wiſe Man that refraineth his Lips*, Prov. x. 19. and, according to *Zeno*'s Expreſſion *(b)*, Dips his Tongue in his Mind, before ever he permits it to ſpeak; conſidering before ever he open his Mouth, what he is to ſay, to whom, when, and where, with ſeveral other Things beſide; but a Fool, as he is full of Words, *Eccleſ.* x. 14. ſo doth he never think beforehand, but ſpeaks at random, whatever comes uppermoſt; and that with ſo little Care or Notice, that he remembers nothing of the Matter, but will many times confidently deny what he ſpeaks juſt before. A wiſe Man likewiſe ſpeaks always pertinently, and is contented with ſuch Words only, as will ſerve to expreſs his Mind, and declare his Meaning; but a Fool is impatient of Silence, and multiplieth Words without end: Like an empty Veſſel, he makes a great ſound, but you will find nothing come from him but what the Apoſtle calls, *fooliſh Talking*, Eph. v. 4. for according to the known Proverb *(c)*, In much Babbling, there muſt needs be much Folly; and therefore no doubt, as Speech is the greateſt Trial of a wiſe Man, ſo Silence is the higheſt Wiſdom of a Fool.

VII. Not that I would have Perſons to be over-reſerved, for this will be took for a Symptom of a ſurly, and ſullen Diſpoſition (which muſt certainly be unacceptable to every Body) or at beſt of Dulneſs and Stupidity; and yet ſome have thought this, though it be repugnant to that Moderation, which conſiſts between both the Extremes, to be

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(a) Atqui ſtultus tacere non poteſt. Eraſm. *Ling.* p. 60. Baſil. 1525. & Plut. *oper. mor.* p. 387, 388. Francof. 1603. *(b) Gov. of Tongue.* Sect. 9. §. 2. p. 156. Oxon. 1675. *(c)* Ἐν πολυλογίᾳ ἔστ πολυμωείᾳ.

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the ſafer Extreme of the two; becauſe multiplicity of Words is generally more offenſive, and dangerous than Silence: Perhaps it may not be improper to take Notice of Mr. *Feltham*'s Reſolution in this Caſe; "Silence and Speech, "ſays he *(a)*, are both as they are uſed, either Tokens of "Indiſcretion, or Badges of Wiſdom; to ſpeak too much, "bewrays Folly; too little, an unperceiving Stupidity; "I will ſo ſpeak, as I may be free from babbling Garru-"lity; ſo be ſilent, as my Spectators may not account me "blockiſhly dull." Now in order to this right Management of the Tongue, two Things ſeem chiefly to be aimed at; firſt to ſpeak in Reaſon, and ſecondly to ſpeak well.

VIII. As to the firſt of theſe, *Solomon* tells us, *Eccleſ.* iii. 7. *There is a time to keep ſilence, and a time to ſpeak*; and therefore he adviſeth, *Prov.* xxvi. 4, 5. *Not to anſwer a Fool according to his Folly, leſt thou be alſo like unto him*; and yet again, *to anſwer a Fool according to his Folly, leſt he be wiſe in his own Conceit*, i. e. the Time and Place, the Diſpoſition of the Perſon, and Manner and Method of Anſwering, with other like Circumſtances, are to be duly weighed and conſidered: For as he elſewhere obſerves, *A wiſe Man's Heart diſcerneth both Time and Judgment*, Eccleſ. viii. 5. Thus for Inſtance, the Son of *Sirach* adviſeth *not to make much babbling when thou prayeſt, nor to uſe many Words in a multitude of Elders*, Eccluſ. vii. 14. and again, *Eccluſ.* xxxii. 9. *If thou be among great Men, make not thy ſelf equal with them, and when ancient Men are in place, uſe not many Words*; and the Prophet *Amos*, Chap. v. *v.* 13. mentions a time in which *the Prudent ſhould keep Silence, becauſe it was an evil time.* And indeed, to know when to be ſilent, and when to ſpeak, is no ſmall Sign of Prudence and Wiſdom: For ſo ſaith the wiſe Man, *Some Man holdeth his Tongue, becauſe he hath not to anſwer, and ſome keepeth Silence, knowing his time: A wiſe Man will hold his Tongue till he ſee Opportunity, but a Babbler and a Fool will regard no time*; and an unſeaſonable Tale will always be in the Mouth of the unwiſe, *Eccluſ.* xx. 6, 7, 19. for which very Reaſon therefore it ſhall be rejected; for ſo it immediately follows, *v.* 20. *A wiſe Sentence ſhall be rejected, when it cometh out of a Fool's Mouth, for he will not ſpeak it in due ſeaſon.* For

(a) Ow. Feltham's *Reſolves*, Cent. 2. §. 8. p. 334. Lond. 1647. Quarto.

all Diſcourſe indeed, like the Seaſon of the Year, is ſtill beſt in its proper time; and then likely to do moſt good: *A Word ſpoken in due ſeaſon*, ſaith *Solomon*, *how good is it*, Prov. xv. 23. ſo good, that he compares it, *Prov.* xxv. 2. *to Apples of Gold, in Pictures of Silver*; alluding perhaps to ſome ſuch Ornaments that were in thoſe Days uſed to beautifie, and ſet off their Houſes, or the Furniture of the ſame. And as it is thus beautiful and goodly; ſo likewiſe is it Noble, and Excellent (*a*), Godlike, and Divine; and therefore *Socrates* (*b*) adviſed all to ſeal their Words with Silence, and their Silence with Opportunity; as if it were impoſſible to ſpeak much, and ſeaſonably too: For there is a time when nothing at all is to be ſpoken, and there is a time when ſomething may be ſaid; but there is no time when all is to be declared, and told. It was therefore a wiſe Reſolution of Holy *David*, Pſal. xxxix. 1. To *keep his Mouth with a Bridle, leſt at any time* (as he tells us *Moſes* once did, *Pſal.* cvi. 33.) *he ſhould ſpeak unadviſedly with his Lips*: For as his Son hath obſerved, *Prov.* xxix. 20. *Seeſt thou a Man that is haſty in his Words, there is more hope of a Fool than of him*; and therefore ſaith the Son of *Sirach*, Eccluſ. xxxii. 7. *ſpeak, if there be need of thee, and yet ſcarcely when thou art twice asked.* The better to prevent which unadviſed Raſhneſs, as we have two Eyes, and two Ears, and only one Tongue; ſo that Tongue is hemm'd in, and guarded with a double Fence; not only the Fence of the Teeth (as *Homer* (*c*) calls it) but of the Lips too: The Deſign of Nature's doing which was no doubt, that it ſhould not move too nimbly; to which perhaps the wiſe Man alludes, when he ſays, *Eccluſ.* xxviii. 25. *Weigh thy Words in a Balance, and make a Door and Bar for thy Mouth*; or diligently look after that which is made already.

IX. But Secondly, as we are to take all imaginable Care to ſpeak Opportunely, and in Seaſon; ſo likewiſe to ſpeak Well, and to the Purpoſe; which they that ſpeak much, or too faſt, ſeldom do. It hath been obſerved, That Children that ſtay longer than ordinary before they

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(*a*) *Proximus ille Deo, qui ſcit ratione tacere.* Cato. (*b*) Σφράγιζε τὰς μὲν λόγους σιγῇ, τὴν δὲ σιγὴν Καιρῷ. (*c*) Ἔρκος ὀδόντων Hom. Il. 4. v. 350. & iter. Odyſs. l. 1. v. Aul. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 1. c. 15. p. 38. Colon. 1541.

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begin to ſpeak, when they do ſo, ſpeak much the ſtronger and better; whereas thoſe that ſpeak quickly, do it more feebly, and are longer before they begin to go; as Herbs and Flowers, and Plants are ſo much the weaker, by how much ſooner they are forced, and the higher they run up; ſo great Talkers diſcharge too thick to take always true aim; and raſh and inconſiderate Speech will be found to be little better than Impertinence, or Folly: Whence of *Caræon* (*a*), who was very Talkative and full of Words, and came to be inſtructed by *Iſocrates*, that Eloquent Orator asked a double Fee, one to learn him to ſpeak well, another to teach him to hold his Peace. For though Speech be a common Gift, yet all have not Wiſdom enough to uſe it aright: Neither is a voluble Tongue always a Sign of a great Wit, or a ſound Judgment. The beſt way therefore for Speech is to be ſhort, plain and material; and to comprehend rather much in a few Words, than a few Things in many: We commonly ſay few Words are beſt: Thus the Oracles among the Heathens, the Sayings of the wiſeſt and moſt famous Men amongſt them, all Apophthegms, and Axioms, all Aphoriſms, and Maxims, are generally very ſhort, yet very comprehenſive; and that Speech which upon theſe Accounts comes neareſt to them, will be moſt acceptable, and praiſe-worthy; as that Archer is not ſo much to be commended, who ſhoots many, as he that hits the Mark, with the very firſt Arrow: There is in ſuch Diſcourſe a certain Gracefulneſs (*b*) which renders it more lovely and taking, as Pictures drawn in little, or miniature are counted more valuable than larger Draughts; for as a Gold Coin doth out-value and out-weigh a bigger one of a baſer Metal; ſo many times three or four Words may be more prevalent, and do more good, than an idle and impertinent Diſcourſe of an Hour long: Thus it was recorded of *Cato*, That he was mightily admired, becauſe making an Oration to the Athenians, he comprehended in a very few Words, what the Interpreter could not expound, and explain in a great many. Beſides this way of Speaking hath alſo this Advantage, that what

(*a*) Stob. *Serm.* 36. *and* Feltham's *Reſolves*, Cent. I. §. 93 p. 291. Lond. 1647. (*b*) Χάεις βαιῶν ὀπηδεῖ. Adag.

is ſaid, is ſooner took, (*a*) and more eaſily retained. Words, like Seed, are not to be ſowed too thick, fewer will do much better, if they be ſuitable, and good; and therefore the Advice the wiſe Man gives is this, *Let thy Speech be ſhort, comprehending much in few Words*, Eccluſ. xxxii. 8. For there may be ſome Diſcourſes, which are very long, and yet very barren; and ſome Perſons that may ſay too (*b*) much, and yet not all.

X. It is true indeed, the Tongue is a very buſie active Member, and it ſeems ſomewhat difficult to keep it from motion, or govern it aright; but yet it is not impoſſible ſo to do: Yea, *Ovid.* l. 2. *Eleg.* fanſied it to be no hard labour at all. But however, the Difficulty ought not to deter any from ſo noble an Undertaking, but rather ſpur them on to ſet about it the ſooner, and with the greater Vigour: Not that I would advice any to be altogether mute, or draw out their Words ſlowly, as the Water drops from an Alembick; ſo that before they bring their Diſcourſe to a Period, they forget the beginning; which to Hearers, even of an ordinary Capacity, muſt needs be as offenſive, as the giving Drink drop by drop to one that is very thirſty: No, I would only, as St. *James* exhorts, *Jam.* i. 19. have *every one ſwift to hear, but ſlow to ſpeak*; to let his Words be few, but well adviſed; and to conſider beforehand, whether or no what he is about to ſay, be fit and proper to be ſpoken: For tho' ſuch as are unwiſe, ſpeak firſt, and conſider afterwards; yet all prudent Perſons do firſt conſult with Reaſon, and then ſpeak with Circumſpection: Whence the former are ſaid to carry their hearts in their mouths, but the latter their Mouths in their Hearts. *Solomon* therefore adviſeth thus, *Be not raſh with thy Mouth, and let not thine Heart be haſty to utter any thing*, Eccleſ. v. 2. it follows indeed, *before God*; but the ſame may be ſaid before Men too; as the Son of *Sirach* alſo exhorts, Not to *Anſwer before thou haſt heard the Cauſe, neither to interrupt Men in the midſt of their Talk*, Eccluſ. xi. 8. but to *prepare what to ſay beforehand*, Eccluſ. xxxiii. 4. to take care what

(*a*) *Quicquid præcipies eſto brevis, ut cito dicta Percipiant animi dociles, teneántq; fideles.* Horat de Art. *Poet.* (*b*) *Quidam nimium dicunt, nec tamen totum.* Quint. l. 5.

is to be ſaid, and to whom, (*a*) That nothing may come forth, which may draw Repentance after it. This was the Practice of *Phocion*, That famous (*b*) *Athenian*, to whom, a little before he was to make an Oration to the People, one coming and telling him he was very thoughtful: Yea, *ſays he*, you gueſs right, for I am now conſidering, Whether or no I can cut off any thing from what I have prepared to ſpeak in this Aſſembly. And truly in this Caſe a Man cannot be too wary, becauſe there is more recalling what is once ſpoken, than retaking a Bird (*c*) that hath flown out of his Hands: And, however, the Words were his own, whilſt he kept them in, yet as ſoon as they are out, they become anothers.

XI. Beſides, as we have already ſhewn ſuch Garrulity and Babbling, to be very fooliſh; ſo likewiſe is it vain, hateful, evil, and ridiculous: Firſt, As to the Vanity thereof, that appears from St. *Paul*'s calling it, *Vain Babbling*, 1 Tim. vi. 20. and 2 Tim. ii. 16. and thoſe that are addicted to it, *Vain Talkers*, Tit. i. 10. and well indeed may they be ſaid to talk in vain, to whom thoſe that hear 'em give ſo little heed, as they generally do to ſuch impertinent Pratlers: Thus, for Inſtance, to a fooliſh Talker, who after a long Diſcourſe, ſaid to *Ariſtotle*, I am afraid, I have been tedious to you: Not at all, anſwered that eminent Philoſopher, for I did not mind you. For why *ſhould a Man reaſon with unprofitable Talk, or with Speeches wherewith he can do no good*, Job xv. 3. and therefore ſuch *vain Words*, Eph. v. 6. are fitly called by Holy *Job*, *Words of Wind*, Job xvi. 3. becauſe they have no Solidity, but are lighter than the Wind it ſelf. But,

XII. Secondly, Such Talkativeneſs, as it is fooliſh and vain, ſo likewiſe it is odious, and hateful too: There are ſome Vices, and Offences, that ſtir up Hatred and Envy, as Pride and Oppreſſion: Others that procure Scorn and Contempt, as Wantonneſs and Luxury, Folly and Sloth: But none render Perſons more troubleſome and hateful, more vile and contemptible, than ſilly and importunate

(*a*) *Diu conſidera quid loquendum ſit, & adhuc tacens provide ne quid dixiſſe pœniteat.* Hieronym. (*b*) Plutarch. Apopht. p. 343. (*c*) *Semel emiſſum volat irrevocabile verbum.* Horat. l. 1. Epiſt. 18.

Babbling: Thoſe that are given to it, make all to whom they have acceſs, uneaſie; whether in the Houſe, or in the Street; whether on the Road, or at a Feaſt, they are ſtill tormenting them; and are as vexatious and offenſive as a Rook-yard in a Spring-Morning to a Contemplative Admirer of Solitude and Repoſe. *Solomon* tells us, *Eccleſ.* x. 11. That *a Babbler is no better than a Serpent*; and therefore it is no wonder, That as the Poet (*a*) adviſeth all to ſhun and avoid him: So the Philoſopher (*b*) wonder'd, That any who had Feet, and could run, did not do ſo. It It is generally thought, that as the reaſon why the *Pythagoreans* abſtained wholly from Fiſh was, by reaſon (*c*) of their Silence; ſo that *Pythagoras* himſelf, by that Symbol of his, (*d*) Not to receive or entertain Swallows under your Roof, did diſſwade from admitting talkative Perſons into your Society: However, 'tis certain, the wiſe Man tells us, *Eccleſ.* xx. 5. 8. 15. *There is one that keepeth ſilence, and is found wiſe, and another by much babbling becometh hateful*: That *he that uſeth many words ſhall be abhorred*; *and he that openeth his mouth like a Cryer, ſhall be hated of God and Man.* As for God, *vain Repetitions*, Mat. vi. 7. and *much Babbling* are no ways pleaſing to him; and therefore *Solomon* adviſeth, *Eccleſ.* v. 2. When we come *before God, to let our words be few*: *For*, ſays he, *Eccleſ.* v. 3. *a Dream cometh through the multitude of Buſineſs, and a Fools Voice is known by multitude of Words.* And in the next Place, as to Man, daily Experience teacheth the Truth of that old Proverb, *That no Diſcourſe is ſo acceptable and grateful, as that which is ſhort and pithy*; and nothing more offenſive and troubleſome than a great Talker. Thus we read, That when a talkative Barber coming to trim King *Archelaus*, asked him, How he would be pleas'd to be ſhaved? the King anſwered, (*e*) Silently: And how when another Prater deſired the Aſſiſtance of *Bion*, the *Boriſthenite*, in a Buſineſs: I will do what I can for you, replied that Philoſopher, (*f*) If you will ſend a Meſſenger to me, and not come

(*a*) *Percontatorem fugito, nam Garrulus idem eſt.* Horat. (*b*) Ariſtoteles *Delaſſatus cujuſdam ineptis Sermonibus*, &c. Eraſm. *Ling.* p. 53. Baſil. 1525. (*c*) Διὰ τὴν ἀχεμυθίαν. Athenæus. l. 7. (*d*) Ὁμοεθβίυς χελιδόνας μὴ ἔχειν. (*e*) *Te tacente.* Plut. p. 328. (*ut ſupra*) (*f*) Stanley's *Hiſt. of Philoſophy.* p. 142.

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your ſelf. Yea, the *Lacedæmonians* abhorr'd ſuch Perſons to that degree, That they baniſhed *Cteſiphon* (a Man otherwiſe very Eloquent) meerly becauſe he brag'd, That he could diſcourſe a whole Day upon any one Subject: Being of the ſame Mind, no doubt, with *Ageſilaus*, one of their Kings, to whom, when one commended a Rhetorician, becauſe he could make large Diſcourſes on ſmall Matters; *I admire not that Man*, anſwered the King, (*a*) *Neither can I think him a good Workman, that makes a large Shooe for a ſmall Foot.*

XIII. Thirdly, Such Garrulity, as it is fooliſh, vain, and hateful, ſo is it evil alſo: Thus *Plutarch*, As he affirms it to be impoſſible for a (*b*) Man to talk much, and ſay nothing amiſs, ſo he tells us, (*c*) That when *Charilaus* was asked, Why *Lycurgus* made ſo few Laws for the *Lacedæmonians*? He anſwered, *That a few Laws would ſuffice for them that ſpake ſo little. For whilſt the Mouth of the Wicked poureth out evil things*, Prov. xv. 28. *he that keeps his Mouth with a Bridle, will not be ſo apt to tranſgreſs with his Tongue*, Pſal. xxxix. 1. he will not be ſo ready to become a *buſie Body in other Mens matters*, 1 Pet. iv. 15. nor blab out, what he ought to keep ſecret: He will not be prone to ſlander or provoke his Neighbour, nor be ſubject to thoſe many Trips and Failings, to which ſuch as are very Talkative are expoſed. And indeed, whoſoever conſiders how much Evil is, by ſo doing, prevented, muſt needs allow it to be the ſureſt and wiſeſt way, To ſpeak little, and think the more. *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* x. 19. *In the multitude of Words, there wanteth not ſin*; neither can it be denied, but that while our Words are many, Sin is in ſome, if not in the moſt. As when a River overflows, the Water gathers much Slime and Mud, ſo where there are many Words, there are many Faults of courſe; all which to amend will require much pain and trouble; whereas he that ſpeaks little, may mend it ſoon. Neither is it perhaps one of the leaſt Evils that flows from this ill Cuſtom, that Quarrels and Differences are promoted thereby: *A ſoft Anſwer*, ſaith *Solomon, turneth away Wrath, but grievous Words ſtir up*

(*a*) Plutarch. (*b*) *Fieri non poteſt ut garrulitatem non comitetur maledicentia.* Plut. (*c*) Plut. *in Lacon. Apoph. inter op. moral.* p. 404. Francof. 1603.

Anger;

Anger; and how ſoon many times would the Coals of Contention and Variance go out, did not the Tongue enkindle them afreſh: So that we may conclude this Particular with the Words of the Son of *Sirach*, Eccleſ. xix. 6. *He that can rule his Tongue, ſhall live without Strife, and he that hateth Babbling ſhall have leſs Evil*; which leads in the Fourth Place to ſhew, That

XIV. Garrulity or Talkativeneſs is likewiſe very dangerous, and many times deſtructive: *Theophraſtus* was wont to ſay, (*a*) It was ſafer truſting to an unbridled Horſe, than to intemperate Speech: And *Zeno*, (*b*) That it was better to ſlip with the Foot, than with the Tongue; as the Son of *Sirach* alſo tells us, Eccluſ. xx. 18. That *to ſlipt upon a Pavement is better, than to ſlip with the Tongue*; which, 'tis true, is but a little Member, but doth often, by its activity and nimbleneſs, do a great deal of Miſchief: According to the *Italian* Proverb, *The Tongue, tho' it hath no Bones, yet many times it breaks the Back.* *Solomon* ſays, *Prov.* xii. 13. *The wicked is ſnared by the Tranſgreſſion of his Lips*; That *he that keepeth his Mouth* (*i. e.* from raſh and haſty Speeches) *keepeth his Life, but he that openeth wide his Lips, ſhall have Deſtruction*, Prov. xiii. 3. and Prov. xviii. 7. That *a Fools Mouth is his deſtruction, and his Lips are the ſnare of his Soul*; and indeed, daily Experience doth too abundantly teach, That thoſe who ſet no guard upon their Tongues, are hurried by them into many Miſchiefs. Therefore have ſent ſuch Babblers to the Cranes, for of them it is related, (*c*) That flying out of *Cilicia*, over the Mountain *Taurus*, each one carrieth in his Mouth a little Stone, to prevent their being betray'd (through their Garrulity and Chattering) to the Eagles. The wiſe King tells us, *Prov.* x. 10. That *a prating Fool ſhall fall*; and *Eccleſ.* x. 12. That *the Lips of a Fool will ſwallow up himſelf*; it is generally thought the Lips of that *Amalekite* did ſo, who brought *David* Tydings of the *Overthrow of the Iſraelites*, 2 *Sam.* i. *and*, whilſt hoping for a Reward, *he accuſed himſelf of Saul's Death*, he thereby procured his own. *Solomon* tells

(*a*) *Government of the Tongue.* §. 9. p. 156. *ed.* 3. Oxon. 1675. (*b*) Stanley's *Hiſt. of Philoſophy.* P. viii. p. 424. Lond. 1687. *ed.* 2. *Fol.* (*c*) Swan's *Speculum Mundi*, c. 8. §. 2. p. 405, 406. Camb. 1644.

us,

us, *Prov.* xiv. 23. That *the talk of the Lips tendeth only to penury*; and how many idle Praters are thus indeed brought to Poverty, whilſt for the ſake of a little Chat, their main Buſineſs, that ſhould ſupport them, and their Families, is neglected? But this is not all, many a Man's Life hath been endangered, and loſt by theſe Means; yea the wiſe Man affirms, *Eccluſ.* xxviii. 18. That *though many have fallen by the edge of the Sword, yet not ſo many as have fallen by the Tongue*: It is an old Saying indeed, *That many times the Tongue hath cut off the Head*; and this ſeems to have haſten'd the Death both of *Demoſthenes* and *Tully*, as well as of many others: Yea, how unhappily have ſome proved their own Delators and Accuſers? How often hath a Man's own Tongue been produced as a Witneſs to the Confuſion of his Face! and how many by diſcovering their own important Secrets have ruined themſelves? So that this particular we way conclude with a common *Latin* (*a*) Saying, which hath been very well render'd thus in Engliſh by a Poet of our own,

(*b*) *I never yet did ever read of any,*
Undone by Hearing, but by Speaking many.

XV. Laſtly, As this Practice is fooliſh, odious, and vain, evil, and pernicious, ſo it is alſo very ridiculous: The Truth thereof is ſo very evident, that I ſhall only add, How, among the *Romans*, the Cuſtom was to carry about in publick Shews, or Sights, certain Puppets or Images called (*c*) *Citeriæ*, that were made to talk and prattle very much, only to make Sport and create Laughter. And thus much concerning Talkativeneſs, or vain Babbling; on which I have the longer inſiſted, becauſe if that were carefully avoided, in all probability, thoſe other Offences of an unbridled Tongue, which I have already mention'd, or am ſtill ſo to do, would not be ſo common.

(*a*) *Nulli tacuiſſe nocet, nocet eſſe locutum.* (*b*) Randolph. (*c*) *Citeria, effigies quædam arguta, & loquax, ridiculi gratiâ, quæ in pompâ vehi Romæ ſolita ſit.* Feſt.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of Oſtentation, or Boaſting.

I. ST. *James* tells us, *Jam.* iii. 5. That *the Tongue is a little Member, but boaſteth great Things:* and indeed Oſtentation, or Boaſting, is a Vanity to which ſome Perſons Tongues have a wonderful Glibneſs and Proclivity: And is commonly defined to be, (*a*) A ſilly extolling of a Man's ſelf beyond his Deſerts, as well as beyond the Bounds of Reaſon and Truth; the doing of which, ſince it uſually proceeds from the odious Sin of Pride (which puts Men upon diſcerning nothing in themſelves but Matter of Admiration) 'tis therefore no wonder, that St. *Paul* tells us, 1 *Cor.* v. 6. *Such glorying is not of God*; and St. *James*, that *to rejoyce in ſuch boaſtings is evil*, Jam. iv. 16. And much more becoming certainly is that Modeſty, which reſtrains all exceſſive Talkativeneſs, and baniſhes all the inſolent Vauntings of thoſe, who ſay, *With our Tongues will we prevail, our Lips are our own, who is Lord over us*, Pſal. xii. 4. or who ſhall direct and order us what we ſhall ſpeak? How harſhly and unſeemly doth that inſolent Speech of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s ſound, to *Shadrach*, *Meſhech*, and *Abednego*? Dan. iii. 15. *Who is that God that ſhall deliver you out of my Hands?* and the like of *Pharaoh* to *Moſes*, and *Aaron*, Exod. v. 2. *Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey his Voice, to let Iſrael go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Iſrael go.* But ſcarce any Perſons do more diſcover their weakneſs of Brain, and debility of Mind, than thus proud Boaſters.

II. Some are always bragging of their Pedegree and Deſcent, and can talk of nothing but their Gentility, and the Grandeur of their Families: Like the Hypocritical *Jews*, who made their Boaſt of having *Abraham for their Father*, Mat. iii. 9. Luke iii. 8. from whoſe Faith, and Holineſs of Life, they did nevertheleſs ſo very much degenerate. But St. *Paul* will have none to *glory in Men*, 1 Cor. iii. 21. who have all the ſame Original: And it is poſſible, that ſuch proud Boaſters, if they would but caſt their Eyes a few

(*a*) Aquin. 2a. 2æ. qu. 112. p. 206. col. 1.

Genera-

Generations backward, may find ſome ſuch Perſons in their Families, as they ſhall have little or no Reaſon to brag, or be proud of. For though it be true, that Vertue alone doth confer effective and real Worth; yet there is nothing more certain, than that ſuch a Pre-eminence is not always ſo founded, but doth too too often owe its riſe to Injuſtice and Oppreſſion, to Robbery and Wrong. But farther yet, (not to mention how ridiculous, and unreaſonable it is for a Man to boaſt of what others have been, or done before him, to which ſince he did nothing contribute, what Reaſon is there it ſhould be *(a)* called his own?) it may alſo happen to be a bad Man's Lot to be born after this manner, and then it will ſeem rather Matter of Shame, than boaſting to come of great Parentage, and want ſuch Accompliſhments and Qualities, as are ſuitable to the ſame. And, as let a Man deſcend from what Family he will, if he turn Rake, and Debauche, his Gentility will ſignifie little here, ſo will it avail nothing at all hereafter: As at the firſt planting of the Goſpel, one of the Propagators thereof tells us, 1 *Cor.* i. 26. That *not many mighty, or many noble were called and converted*; ſo at the great Day of Judgment, they will find themſelves very much miſtaken, who are of the ſame Opinion with Captain *(b) Uratz*, who, when he was executed for murthering Eſq; *Thynn*, affirmed, *God would ſhew him reſpect, and ſave him, as he was a Gentleman.*

III. Others are continually boaſting of ſuch Blaſts and Bubbles, ſuch Vapours and Shadows, as Honour and Preferment; and become very ſtarched and ſupercilious, meerly becauſe they are raiſed a little higher than their Neighbours: When 'tis poſſible, this their Advancement may be obtained by undue and unlawful Means, as Injuſtice and Undermining, Flattery and ſinful Compliance: It is poſſible alſo a Perſon may be great, but not good; and Dignities conferred on ſuch a one are ſo far from making him more honourable, that they diſcover his Unworthineſs the more: However, this is certain, That Honour

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(a) Qui genus jactat ſuum, Aliena laudat. Seneca. *in Herc. fur. Genus, & proavos, & quæ non fecimus ipſi Vix ea noſtra voco.* Ovid. Met. *(b) New* Quivedo. P. II. p. 44 Lond. 1702. Foe's *Poor Man's Plea concerning Reformation.*

and

and Preferment are many times beſtowed not according to Merit, but Pleaſure, or Chance: As after the Battle of *Mont-hery*, fought between *Lewis* XI. of *France*, and *Charles* Duke of *Burgundy*, ſome loſt their Offices (*a*) or Places for flying, which were beſtowed upon others that fled Ten Leagues beyond 'em: Yea, many times they are purchaſed with Money, and then to ſuch as boaſt on this Account we may ſay, as one did to his Father, when he told him he was Knighted, You have that which every one may have for his Money. Beſides, ſuch proud Boaſters would do well to conſider, That as the higheſt Mountains are moſt ſubject to the Storms of Thunder, and Battery of Hail, ſo thoſe who are advanced on the higheſt Pinnacles of Humane Glory ſtand uneaſie, and are continually expoſed to great Dangers, as well as Anxieties and Fears; they ſtand as it were upon Ice, where if they once begin to ſlip, their own Weight will ſoon down with them quite, and then there will be enough ready to join to keep them under. To all which we may add, How many Snares attend Greatneſs, and how often it Diſpoſes the Mind to ſuch an heedleſs Security, as to take no manner of care to avoid them; and that God Almighty ſeems to raiſe up ſome in Judgment, that they may have the greater Fall. Wicked *Haman*, after his Advancement what a buſtle did he make, *Eſter* v. 11, 12. He ſends for his Friends, and *tells them* (in a boaſting manner) *of the Glory of his Riches, and the Multitude of his Children, and all the Things wherein the King had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the Princes and Servants of the King: Yea moreover,* ſaid he, *Eſter the Queen did let no Man come in with the King unto the Banquet, that ſhe had prepared, but my ſelf, and to morrow am I invited unto her alſo with the King*: Little thinking, vain Man, that it was in order to his higher Advancement on the Gallows.

IV. Others again are always bragging of their large Eſtates, and the Multitude of their Riches; but the Pſalmiſt makes this part of a wicked Man's Character, *Pſal.* lii. 7. and how diſpleaſing it is to God, *Hezekiah* found by ſad Experience, 2 *Kings* xx. 12, *&c.* at what

(*a*) Phil. *Comines, as cited in* William de Britain's *Humane Prudence.* §. 16. p. 102. ed. 7. Lond. 1697.

time,

time by making Oſtentation of his Treaſures to the Meſſengers of the King of *Babylon*, he provoked God to ſend him word by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, that the time ſhould come, when all that Wealth of which he boaſted, ſhould be carried away thither. And certainly, we ought not to have any high eſteem of that, which the holy Scriptures call Duſt, *Job* xxvii. 16. Mire, *Zech.* ix. 3. and *thick Clay*, *Hab.* ii. 6. eſpecially if we conſider how often the ſame is procured by Violence, and Deceit; and is ſo far from being always the Lot of the Righteous, that it ſeems many times given for a Curſe, and a Snare. Beſides, true Happineſs *doth not conſiſt in the abundance of the Things, which a Man poſſeſſeth*, Luke xii. 15. from which what good doth redound to the Owners thereof, ſaving the beholding them with their Eyes. *Midas* ſoon repented of the Privilege the Poets feign to have been granted him, of turning whatſoever he touched into Gold, when he found he muſt ſtarve, unleſs the ſame were cancell'd and repealed; and daily Experience teacheth how unable Riches are to preſerve the Poſſeſſors of the ſame, from the Stone or Gout, the Dropſy or Fever. Yea farther yet, *Solomon* tells us, *Eccleſ.* v. 13. That *Riches are ſometimes kept for the Owners thereof to their hurt*; either by expoſing them to Envy, and Danger, to Violence and Rapine; or by becoming Occaſions of Sin, and Fewel of Luxury, and Luſt; and incentives to Pride and Vanity, Violence and Oppreſſion, Gluttony and Exceſs, Idleneſs, Gaming, *&c.* and indeed Riches are ſo great an Incitement, or Provocation (*a*) to Wickedneſs; ſuch a *Root of all Evil is the love of them*, 1 Tim. vi. 10. and ſo apt are they to engender Pride, Security, Forgetfulneſs of God, *&c.* that no wonder our bleſſed Saviour repreſents the Rich Man's entring into the Kingdom of Heaven as ſo very difficult, *Mat.* xix. 23, 24. Neither ought we to think it ſtrange, that holy *David* affirms, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 16. *That little which a righteous Man hath to be much better than the Riches of the wicked*: If we likewiſe conſider how often *the abundance of the Rich will not ſuffer him to ſleep, whilſt the ſleep of a labouring Man is ſweet*, Eccleſ. v. 12. The Sleep of the latter is neither hindred by careful Thoughts,

(*a*) *Irritamenta malorum.* Ovid.

nor

nor covetous Deſires; nor diſquieted with crude and offenſive Vapours; whilſt in the former, through Riot and Exceſs, Nature is ſo overcharged, and ſuch Indigeſtion, and malignant Vapours are ingendred, as hinders him from taking his Natural Repoſe, or at leaſt do very much diſturb, and diſquiet him in ſo doing; or if not ſo, the ſame may be done by thoſe Cares and Fears, thoſe Troubles and that Hurry and multitude of Buſineſs, which accompany Riches; which very often (beſides the Uneaſineſs they give him to ſecure and preſerve them during his Life) do likewiſe perplex him with relation to his Heirs, and Executors, and make him as uneaſy in contriving to whom to leave them when he dies.

V. That is, if they leave not him firſt; For *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* xxvii. 24. That *Riches are ſo far from enduring for ever, that they make themſelves Wings, and fly away as an Eagle toward Heaven,* Prov. xxiii. 5. he alſo tells us, *Prov.* xiii. 11. That *Wealth gotten by Vanity ſhall be diminiſhed*; or as the Prophet Words it, *Jer.* xvii. 11. *As the Partridge ſitteth on Eggs, and hatcheth them not, ſo he that getteth Riches, and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his Days, and at his end ſhall be a Fool:* And therefore ſince the *Rich may ſo ſoon be ſent empty away,* Luke i. 53. we may ſay to thoſe who boaſt of their Hundreds and Thouſands, as the Spartan in *Plutarch* did to the Athenian Merchant, who brag'd of his great Riches "at Sea, "That he ought not to be puff'd up with a For-"tune, that hung by ſo ſlender Ropes." Or however, if they leave not them before, yet theſe vain-glorious Braggadocio's when they die muſt leave all their Riches behind them, and *as they came naked out of their Mother's Womb, ſo ſhall they return as they came,* Eccleſ. v. 15. *as they brought nothing into this World, ſo ſhall they carry nothing out,* 1 Tim. vi. 7. and therefore ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Be not thou afraid, when one is made Rich, when the Glory of his Houſe is increaſed; for when he dieth, he ſhall carry nothing away, his Glory ſhall not deſcend after him,* Pſal. xlix. 16, 17. In ſhort, let thoſe Perſons, who prefer a large Eſtate before a good Conſcience, and had rather be accounted richer than their Neighbours, than either wiſer, or better; who ſpend that ſmall Portion of Time, which was given them for nobler Ends, in contriving how to add one Field to another,

another, and never ſcruple to make uſe of all the little Tricks, and ſordid Methods to make their Heap of Dirt the larger: Let ſuch conſider how holy *David* tells 'em *That although they truſt in their Wealth, and boaſt themſelves in the multitude of their Riches*: yet *none of them can by any Means redeem his Brother, nor give to God, a ranſom for him*; and however they may think, *that their Houſes ſhall continue for ever, and their dwelling Places to all Generations, and call their Lands after their own Names*; nevertheleſs this is but their Fooliſhneſs, notwithſtanding their Poſterity praiſe their Sayings, *Pſal.* xlix. 6, *&c.* Let them likewiſe conſider St. *Paul*'s Command to *Timothy*, 1 Tim. vi. 17. To *charge ſuch as are rich in this World not to be high-minded, nor to truſt in uncertain Riches*; not to boaſt and be inſolent on that Account, nor depend and rely on their Wealth which they have upon ſuch Uncertainties; but to be humble, and depend upon God, who alone is able to preſerve both them, and what they poſſeſs; and thoſe who will not follow ſo good Advice, will one Day find reaſon enough to uſe thoſe Words of the wiſe Man, *Wiſd.* v. 8. *What hath Pride profited us, or what good have Riches with all our vaunting brought us?*

VI. In like manner ſome are apt to boaſt of their Cloths, and Apparel; ſome of the Beauty and Strength of their Bodies, and others of the Abilities and Endowments of their Minds; but as to the firſt of theſe, for any to boaſt on that Account, is the moſt mean and paltry ſort of Pride that can be: 'Tis a making a Man's Shame his Glory, and priding himſelf in that which ought to be an occaſion of Humiliation; I mean Innocency loſt, and the Fall of Mankind; or can ſuch a one think that any that are truely wiſe and judicious, would ſeek a Man's Perfection on his outſide, or value him the more for ſuch inſignificant Trifles? No, they know very well, that a Gentleman's Behaviour, and Carriage will ſhew him much more to be ſo, than if he had never ſo many, or ſo fine Suits of Apparel. Fooliſh *Haman* indeed ſeems to have been of Opinion (*a*), That Cloths rather than Manners make a Man, *Eſt.* vi 7, 8, 9. when *for the man whom the King did delight to honour, he adviſed the Royal Apparel*

(*a*) Ἐσθὴς ἀνήρ.

to be brought, which the King was wont to wear, and that he ſhould ride on Horſeback with it upon him thorow the City; and yet I ſuppoſe this Royal Apparel of King *Ahaſuerus* had no greater Virtue than that of *Herod*, Acts xii. 23. which could not preſerve him from being eat up with Vermin; or than the Rich Man's Purple, and fine Linen, which could not preſerve him from Death and Damnation, *Luke* xvi. 19. For Perſons to value themſelves by their Cloths; to fanſie themſelves ſo much the better, by how much theſe are the more gay, and new-faſhion'd; or to think that on Account of the ſame, others ſhould give them more than ordinary Reſpect, is ſuch a ridiculous piece of Vanity, that as none but Fools can be guilty of it, ſo no wiſe Man can be thus put upon, who conſiders, that exceſſive Finery ſerves rather to make Perſons poor, than to prove them rich; and that ſuch as wear Cloths much better than their Circumſtances allow, do but expoſe their Diſcretion in thus proclaiming to the World, how much they are indepted to their Drapers and Taylors, *&c.* In a word, it muſt needs be confeſt that the Advice given by the Son of *Sirach*, Eccluſ. xi. 4. is very good, *Boaſt not thy ſelf of thy Cloathing and Raiment, and exalt not thy ſelf in the Day of Honour*: Neither indeed can I ſee why we ſhould, ſince in this Reſpect even the Lilies of the Field go beyond us, and *Solomon in all his Glory was not arayed like one of them*, Mat. vi. 29.

VII. In the next place, as to what we call Beauty, what is it but dirt a little better coloured, and varniſhed than ordinary; and the better to prevent any ones boaſting on that Account, the Spirit of God hath aſſured us, *Prov.* xxxi. 30. that *Beauty is vain*; yea, 'tis poſſible to be worſe; it is poſſible for a Perſon to be fair, but not diſcreet, and handſome, but *(a)* not honeſt; it is poſſible there may be good Features, where there are no good Manners; and much Comelineſs, where there is no good Humour: For the pureſt Souls do not always inhabit the fineſt Bodies; and then Beauty without Honeſty and Vertue, is no more valuable than Poiſon, though in a Box of Gold, or Cabinet of Pearls. What a foul Soul dwelt in that Body of *Abſalom*, in which *there was no*

(a) *Lis eſt cum forma Magna pudicitiæ.* Ovid.

blemiſh

blemiſh from the Sole of the Foot to the Crown of the Head, 2 Sam. xiv. 25. and *Jezebel*, notwithſtanding the great Care and Pains ſhe took in beautifying her Face, 2 *Kings* ix. 30. left but a very bad Character behind her, 1 *Kings* xxi. 25. 2 *Kings* ix. 34. However at beſt, Beauty is of ſo very frail a Conſtitution, and ſubject to ſuch a multitude of Accidents; it is ſuch a fading good and ſhort liv'd Bleſſing, that there can be no great Reaſon of boaſting of it.

VIII. No, nor of Strength of Body neither, which doth ſoon *conſume, as a rotten thing*, Job. xiii. 28. *and as a Garment that is Moth-eaten:* It muſt certainly decay by Age, and we know not but Sickneſs may impair it much ſooner; beſides, how ridiculous is it for a Man to brag of that, wherein his Horſe, or his Ox doth excell him; and which is not always ſucceſsfull neither; for as *Solomon* tells us, *Eccleſ.* ix. 11. *The Battle is not always to the ſtrong, no more than the Race to the ſwift*; ſo we read, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 4, *&c.* how the mighty Champion *Goliah* was conquer'd and ſlain by a young Stripling; however, God himſelf hath expreſly forbid *the mighty Man to glory in his might*, Jer. ix. 23. and the Judgments that were threatned, *Iſa.* x. 13. and inflicted on the King of *Aſſyria*, for his ſo doing, *Iſa.* xxxvi. 18. xxxvii. 36, 38. are enough to deter any from following his Example: For the Lord ſent an Angel, which cut off all the mighty Men of Valour, and the Leaders and Captains in the Camp of the King of *Aſſyria*, ſo he returned with Shame of Face to his own Land, and when he was come into the Houſe of his God, they that came forth of his own Bowels (*i. e.* ſome of his own Sons) ſlew him there with the Sword.

IX. Neither are Wiſdom, or Learning, or the Abilities, and Endowments of the Mind any better Grounds for boaſting than the other; ſince theſe are all the free Gifts of a bountiful God, who beſtows them as he pleaſes, and on many perhaps in a much greater Meaſure than on ſuch as vaunt ſo much of them. When *Nebuchadnezzar* forgetting his Dream, required it of the Chaldeans, *Dan.* ii. 4, *&c.* they preſently pretend to give him Satisfaction, which we find to have been beyond their Skill to do; and yet *Daniel*, who performed, what they could not, humbly acknowledgeth his Wiſdom not to exceed that of other

Men, *v.* 30. What a buſtle did *Simon* the Sorcerer make? *Acts* viii. 9, 10, 11. for we find that as the People of *Samaria*, whom he had a long time betwitched, gave heed unto him from the leaſt to the greateſt, ſaying that he was *The great Power of God*; ſo likewiſe he himſelf gave out, that he was ſome great or notable Perſon; whereas St. *Paul*, who was every way beyond him, and had been *caught up to the third Heaven, and into Paradiſe*, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. though he confeſſeth that *knowledge is apt indeed to puff a man up*, 1 Cor. viii. 1. yet he alſo confeſſeth, *v.* 2. That *if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know*, i. e. if he vaunt, and pride himſelf in an Opinion of his own Knowledge, and ſo deſpiſe others; as St. *James* ſeems to intimate, ſaying, *Jam.* iii. 13. *Who is a wiſe Man, and endued with Knowledge amongſt you? let him ſhew out of a good Converſation his Works with Meekneſs of Wiſdom.* Beſides, thoſe who know moſt, know nothing perfectly; they *know but in part*, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. *they ſee but thorough a Glaſs darkly*, *v.* 12. and are ignorant of (*a*) much more than they know; and which is worſe yet, the wiſeſt man then upon Earth hath left upon Record, *Eccleſ.* i. 18. *That in much Wiſdom is much Grief, and that he that encreaſeth Knowledge, increaſeth ſorrow*; and after all, *wiſe Men die as well as the Fool, and brutiſh Perſon*; one event happeneth to them all, *Pſal.* xlix. 10. and *there is no more remembrance of the wiſe, more than of the Fool for ever*, Eccleſ. ii. 14, 16. yea, ſometimes before Death, God *turneth the wiſe men backward, and maketh their Knowledge fooliſh*, Iſa. xliv. 25. as our Chronicles tell of a wonderfull Scholar (*b*) both for Parts and Reading, in the Reign of King *John*, that became at laſt ſo dull, as to be ſcarce able to read.

X. And as little Reaſon have any to boaſt of their great Actions, or noble Exploits, ſince all theſe are performed, not by their own Strength, but by the Grace and Aſſiſtance of God, *Iſa.* xxvi. 12. *Gideon*, notwithſtanding his Victories, and great Atchievements, how mildly doth he argue the Caſe with the Ephraimites, when they contended with him? *Judeth* viii. 2. he caſts his Honour

(*a*) *Maxima pars eorum quæ ſcimus, eſt minima pars eorum quæ neſcimus.* (*b*) Simon Turvey.

at

at their Feet, and prefers their Gleanings to his Vintage; and when *Iſrael* proferred him the Kingdom, which he had merited, *v.* 22. 23. he modeſtly refuſes it: For great Souls are rather for doing things worthy to be admired, than for admiring what themſelves have done; they reſt ſatisfy'd in performing what is noble and brave, and leave it to others to talk of it. Thus *Tacitus* tells us concerning *Agricola*, that notwithſtanding his many Services done to the Empire, he did never by boaſting of the ſame, ſeek to advance his own Glory, but (as an inferior Planet) did modeſtly acknowledge the Light he had to be wholly derived from a higher Sun; and that great Apoſtle St. *Paul*, though he was not a whit behind the very chiefeſt of them all, 2 *Cor.* xi. 5. whether we conſider his Sufferings, and Sincerity, his Conſtancy and Labour in propagating the Goſpel, yet he was ſo far from boaſting on that Account, that he not only ſtiles himſelf the leaſt of the Apoſtles, 1 *Cor.* xv. 9. but acknowledges he was unworthy to be rank'd among them. And to thoſe mighty Grandees, who make ſuch a Noiſe, and Buſtle in the World, and are always recounting their Heroical Atchievements, and good Succeſs in great Undertakings, we may ſay as *Archidamas* did to King *Philip*, "That if they would meaſure their Shadows, they would ſoon find that they are "no bigger now, than they were before;" and after all, their exalted Names will ſoon ceaſe to be remembred, their ſtately Columns, and magnificent Trophies will be in a ſhort time demoliſhed, and themſelves confined to a few Feet of Earth, in thoſe Regions of Darkneſs, where all things are forgotten, *Pſal.* lxxxviii. 12.

XI. Laſtly, We are not to boaſt even of our Vertue, Piety, or good Deeds, like the young Man in the Goſpel who vaunted of his having *kept all God's Commandments*, Mat. xix. 20. or the arrogant *Phariſee*, who being ſwelled with a great Opinion of his own Sanctity, inſtead of praying to God for Pardon of his Sins (as the *Publican* did) ſtood in the Temple, boaſting of his Vertues, for which cauſe the other was accepted by God rather than he; humble Confeſſion of evil Deeds being in St. *Auguſtine*'s Judgment *(a)*

(a) Melior eſt in malis factis humilis confeſſio, quàm in bonis ſuperba gloriatio. Auguſt.

much better than proud boaſting of thoſe that are Good. It is reported of *Alphonſus*, That when an excellent Orator had made unto him a large Oration in Commendation of his Vertues, the King having heard him reply'd, " For what you have ſaid true of me, I am to thank " God for it, and what is wanting in me of what you have " ſaid, I am to pray to God for the ſame: And indeed the Good we do is very little, allayed with ſo many Imperfections and Mixtures of Evil, and ſo far exceeded by the number of our Sins, that we have little reaſon, God knows, to brag on that Account; leſt whilſt we boaſt of our good Deeds, our evil Deeds alſo be laid to our Charge. Beſides, there are many hypocritical Pretenders to Piety and Honeſty, whoſe Gifts and Endowments fall far ſhort of thoſe Opinions and Imaginations they entertain concerning them, whilſt they really are but *as ſounding Braſs, or a tinkling Cymbal*, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. or as St. *Peter* words it, *Wells without Water*, 2 Pet. ii. 17. But however, let their Vertues and Graces be never ſo many and ſo great, never ſo verdant and flouriſhing, yet when once they are ſmitten with the execrable Vice of Pride; then, like *Jonas*'s *Gourd*, Jon. iv. 7. they inſtantly fade, and wither away. Boaſting poiſons the Root of the faireſt Endowments, it preſently blaſts them, and makes them utterly inſignificant: As our Saviour aſſures us, *Mat.* vi. 1. &c. That the moſt excellent Actions of *faſting, praying, and giving Alms*, when done in an open and boaſting manner, to gain the Applauſe of Men, are like to meet with no other Reward. To all which we may add, That if ſuch Boaſters would conſider, how their very *righteouſneſſes are but as filthy Rags*, Iſa. lxiv. 6. and *when they have done all thoſe things they are commanded, they are ſtill but unprofitable Servants*, Luke xvii. 10. they muſt needs then become more humble and modeſt. And if it be thus unlawful to boaſt of any Worth or Excellency, whether real or ſuppoſed; how abominably Wicked muſt it be to do ſo of Vice and Baſeneſs? like thoſe miſerable Wretches, who (as the Pſalmiſt words it, *Pſal.* lii. 1.) *boaſt themſelves in their Miſchief*; and as publickly proclaim their bad, as others their good Deeds; who *glory in their Shame*, (yea many times own more Wickedneſs than ever they did commit) *whoſe end is Deſtruction*, Phil. iii. 19.

XII. But

XII. But to proceed, St. *Paul* tells us, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 4. *True Charity neither vaunteth it ſelf, nor is puffed up,* (which St. *James* applies to *true Wiſdom alſo,* Jam. iii. 14. 15.) and then it immediately follows, *v.* 5. *doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly,* or uncomely, and that very properly; for as he is doubly excellent, who confines all his Perfections within himſelf, without boaſting of any; ſo nothing is more vain, fulſome and fooliſh, than this commending a Man's ſelf, nothing doth render a Man more contemptible or ridiculous, nothing doth more argue want of Wit and Breeding, or ſooner exclude a Man from all Commerce and Converſation: For however Boaſters may become the Idols of Paraſites, and Admiration of Fools, yet they are certainly the Scorn of the Judicious and Wiſe; who know very well, that the Wood which yields the moſt Smoak, commonly give the leaſt Heat, and therefore are ready to liken ſuch ranting Boaſters to Bladders puff'd up with Wind; to Drums, which though they make a great Noiſe, have nothing within; or to the Fly, which ſat on the Axle-tree of the Chariot, and ſaid, *What a Duſt do I raiſe?* It was *Jugurtha*'s Glory, (*a*) That though he performed many great Exploits, yet he never ſaid any thing of himſelf; by this he grew greater than Envy, and obtained the Honour and Regard of Poſterity, whereas, according to Biſhop *Hall*'s (*b*) Obſervation, " Seldom was there a good end of O-" ſtentation, neither I believe did it ever bring Advan-" tage to any.

XIII. In what a vaunting manner did *Goliah* defie the *Armies of Iſrael,* 1 *Sam.* xviii. 8, 9, *&c.* and how ſoon after was his *Head ſevered from his Body? v.* 51. How proudly did *Haman boaſt of the Glory of his Riches, and the Multitude of his Children, and all the things wherein the King had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the Princes and Servants of the King?* Eſt. v. 11. and how few Hours paſſed, before he was advanced indeed, and *hanged on a Gallows fifty cubits high,* Eſt. vii. 9, 10. It was therefore good Advice that *Ahab* ſent to *Benhadad,* King of *Syria,* when he inſolently threaten'd to bring ſo great an

(*a*) *Plurimum faciendo, & nihil de ſeipſo loquendo.* (*b*) *Biſhop* Hall's *Contemplations on the Bible,* vol. 4. l. 13. p. 1085. Lond. 1625.

Army againſt *Samaria*, That *the Duſt of that City ſhould not ſuffice for handfuls for them: Let not him*, ſaith *Ahab*, *that girdeth on his Harneſs, boaſt himſelf, as he that putteth it off*, 1 Kings xx. 10, 11. intimating, That the Iſſue of War was uncertain, and that it was no point of Prudence to Triumph before the Battle was over: And indeed, the Event ſhewed the ſame, for this Army, of which *Benhadad* did brag ſo much, was utterly routed by the Forces of the *King of Iſrael*; and *Benhadad* himſelf was forced to ride for his Life, and make his *Eſcape with the Horſemen*, *v.* 20, 21. Neither perhaps hath God by his holy Prophets ſhew'd his Indignation againſt any one Sin more than againſt this.

XIV. When the King of *Babylon* ſaid, *He would aſcend into Heaven, he would exalt his Throne above the Stars of God: He would ſit alſo upon the Mount of the Congregation in the ſides of the North: He would aſcend above the higheſt of the Clouds, he would be like the moſt high*; yet notwithſtanding theſe haughty Conceits of his Power, and Preſumption of future Greatneſs, he is told in the very next Verſe, That *he ſhould be brought down to Hell, and to the ſides of the Pit*, Iſa. xiv. 13, 14, 15. and again, *Iſa.* xlvii. 1. *Come down and ſit in the Duſt, O Virgin Daughter of Babylon, ſit on the Ground, for thou ſhalt no more be called tender and delicate; no more the Lady of Kingdoms*; becauſe thou ſaideſt, *I am, and none elſe beſides me, I ſhall be a Lady for ever, I ſhall not ſit as a Widow, neither ſhall I know the Loſs of Children*, Iſa. xlvii. 1. 5. 7, 8. So likewiſe ſaith the Lord, *Jer.* xlviii. 29. 33, *&c. We have heard the Pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his Softneſs, and his Arrogancy, and his Pride, and the Haughtineſs of his Heart*: Therefore *joy and gladneſs is taken from the Land of Moab, and I will cauſe to ceaſe in Moab*, ſaith the Lord, *him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incenſe to his Gods: There ſhall be Lamentation generally upon all the Houſe tops of Moab, and in the Streets thereof; for I have broken Moab like a Veſſel, wherein is no pleaſure*, ſaith the Lord; *and Moab ſhall be deſtroyed from being a People, becauſe he hath magnified himſelf againſt the Lord.* And of *Tyrus*, becauſe he brag'd how he was *of perfect Beauty*; therefore the Lord declared, That *her Riches and her Fairs, her Merchandize, and her Mariners, her Pilots, and all her Men of War*, &c.

ſhould

ſhould fall into the midſt of the Seas, in the day of her Ruin, Ezek. xxvii. 3. 27. and *unto the Prince of Tyrus,* thus ſaith the Lord God, *Becauſe thine Heart is lifted up, and thou haſt ſaid, I am God, I ſit in the ſeat of God, in the midſt of the Seas: Behold therefore,* ſaith the Lord, *I will bring Strangers upon thee, the terrible of the Nations; and they ſhall bring thee down to the Pit, and thou ſhalt die the Deaths of them that are ſlain in the midſt of the Seas; and the Deaths of the uncircumciſed by the hand of Strangers, for I have ſpoken it, ſaith the Lord,* Ezek. xxviii. 2. 7, 8. 10. In like manner, by the ſame Prophet, did the Lord ſhew his Indignation againſt *Pharaoh,* King of *Egypt,* Ezek. xxix. 3. 9. becauſe he boaſted, That *the River was his own, and he had made it for himſelf:* That therefore *the Land of Egypt ſhould be deſolate and waſt, and they ſhould know that he was the Lord.* And to mention but Two Inſtances more, *viz.* Of *Edom* and *Nineveh*; concerning the former we have theſe Words, *Obad. v.* 3, 4. *The Pride of thine Heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwelleſt in the clefts of the Rock, whoſe Habitation is high, that ſaith in his Heart, Who ſhall bring me down to the Ground? Though thou exalt thy ſelf as the Eagle, and though thou ſet thy Neſt among the Stars, yet thence will I bring thee down, ſaith the Lord:* And the Judgment of the latter is thus expreſſed, *Zeph.* ii. 13, 14, 15. *The Lord will ſtretch out his Hand againſt Nineveh, and make her a Deſolation, and dry like a Wilderneſs: Flocks ſhall lie down in the midſt of her, all the Beaſts of the Nations: both the Cormorant, and the Bittern ſhall lodge in the upper lintels of it, their Voice ſhall ſing in the Windows, Deſolation ſhall be in the Threſholds; for he ſhall uncover the Cedar Work: This is the rejoycing City that dwelt careleſly, that ſaid in her heart, I am, and there is none beſide me, how is ſhe become a Deſolation, a Place for Beaſts to lie down in? every one that paſſeth by her, ſhall hiſs, and wag his Hand.*

XV. Thus we ſee, That the Condition of ſuch Boaſters is not ſo good and ſafe, as they Imagine; neither is it any ſmall Aggravation of their Miſery, that there is little or no hope of their becoming Wiſer: For ſo ſaith *Solomon,* Prov. xxvi. 12. *Seeſt thou a Man wiſe in his own conceit? there is more hope of a Fool than of him.* It is a Saying of

Thucy-

Thucydides, ' (*a*) That Simplicity with Sobriety or Humi-' lity, is to be preferr'd before unruly Wit or Dexterity: As therefore the repenting and humbled *Publicans and Harlots* are ſaid to *enter the Kingdom of God before* the proud and conceited Elders, and chief Prieſts, *Mat.* xxi. 31. So a Fool that will be counſelled and adviſed, may ſooner come to true Wiſdom, than ſuch haughty Scorners, as *hate Inſtruction, and caſt all wholeſome Admonition behind them*, Pſal. l. 17. who ſo abound with the Opinion of their own Self-ſufficiency, as to think it their part rather to teach than learn; and fanſie their Perfections to be ſo great, as to admit of no Addition: But a wiſer than they hath aſſured us, That *whoſo loveth Inſtruction, loveth Knowledge, but he that hateth Reproof is brutiſh*, Prov. xii. 1. and Ch. xv. *v.* 32. That *he that refuſeth Inſtruction, deſpiſeth his own Soul, but he that heareth Reproof, getteth Underſtanding.*

XVI. The ſame wiſe Prince hath left them this Advice, *Prov.* xxvii. 2. *Let another Man praiſe thee, and not thine own Mouth, a Stranger, and not thine own Lips*; unleſs it may ſo happen, that there be a neceſſity for doing otherwiſe, as when the Diſgrace of the Perſon tends alſo to the Diſgrace of the Goſpel, of Religion, yea of God himſelf; then a Holy kind of Boaſting may be not only allowable, but very requiſite. This was St. *Paul*'s Caſe, he tells us, 2 *Cor.* x. 18. That *not he that commendeth himſelf is approved*; and yet in the very next Chapter, *v.* 21, 22, *&c.* he enters upon a forced Commendation of himſelf; though he confeſſeth *it was fooliſh*, *v.* 1. 21. and yet certainly if ever, it was not only excuſable, but commendable in him then to do ſo; for he did it not out of a Principle of vain-glory, or for his own ſake, but becauſe he ſaw the Goſpel was wounded through his ſide, by ſome falſe Apoſtles, who mightily boaſted, That they were *Iſraelites*, and of *Abraham*'s Stock, and Miniſters of Chriſt, in the mean time vilifying the Perſon and Office of St. *Paul*, and conſequently bringing his Doctrine into Obloquy and Contempt. So that, as he ſaith himſelf, 2 *Cor.* xii. 11. if he did *become a Fool in glorying*, it was becauſe he *was compelled* to ſay what he did, and put upon a neceſſity of com-

(*a*) Ἀμαθία μετὰ σωφροσύνης ὠφελιμώτερον, ἢ δεξιότης μετὰ ἀκολασίας. Thucyd.

mend-

mending himſelf, ſo to vindicate his Miniſtry from Contempt, and declare the infallible Teſtimonies of his Apoſtleſhip; to ſtop the Mouths of thoſe falſe Apoſtles, who traduced his Perſon, and vilified his Miniſtry, and to undeceive the *Corinthians*, who by the craft and ſubtilty of ſuch Seducers were brought to deſpiſe St. *Paul*, and prefer thoſe vain-glorious Deceivers before him: Like that ignorant French-man, who, when *Calvin* preach'd at one Church, and *Viret* (another Reformer) elſewhere in *Geneva*, being ask'd why he did not come ſometimes, and hear the latter, made Anſwer, '(*a*) That if St. *Paul* ſhould 'come, aud preach at the ſame time *Calvin* did, he would 'leave St. *Paul*, to hear *Calvin*. Had it not been upon this ſo neceſſary an Account, we ſhould never have heard that Apoſtle, glorying in any thing, but what related to his Infirmities, which he ſo frequently recounts in his Epiſtles: For the Holineſs of his Life, and the Dignity of his Office, made him not proud and imperious, but humble and meek; and like the fixed Stars, the higher he was, the leſs he deſired to appear. *God forbid*, ſaith he, *Gal.* vi. 14. *that I ſhould glory, ſave in the Croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: and 2 *Cor.* xi. 30. *If I muſt needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine Infirmities, i. e.* his Sufferings and Afflictions. From the ſame Apoſtle alſo a Man may learn how, when forced to ſpeak any thing in his own Commendation, to do it, *viz.* by altering the Perſon, and ſpeaking of himſelf, as of another, or of a third Perſon: *I knew a Man in Chriſt*, ſays he, ſpeaking of himſelf, *about fourteen Years ago*, &c. *caught up to the third Heaven, or into Paradiſe, and heard unſpeakable Words, which it is not lawful for a Man to utter: Of ſuch a one will I glory, yet of my ſelf I will not glory, but in mine Infirmities*, 2 *Cor.* xii. 2. 4, 5. as St. *John* deſcribes himſelf by the *Diſciple whom Jeſus loved*, Joh. xix. 26. ortherwiſe, the rejoycing of ſuch as *rejoyce in their boaſtings is evil*, *Jam.* iv. 16. the better to prevent which, I would have ſuch Perſons to conſider,

XVII. In the firſt place, *Who made them differ from another? and what have they, that they did not receive: Now*, as the Apoſtle argues, 1 *Cor.* iv. 7. *if they did receive it*,

(*a*) *Si veniret Sanctus* Paulus, *qui eâdem horâ concionaretur quâ &* Calvinus, *ego relicto* Paulo, *audirem* Calvinum. Zanch.

why

why do they glory, as if they had not received it: For as St. *James* affirms, Chap. i. *v.* 17. *Every good Gift, and every perfect Gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights.* And *ſhall the Ax boaſt it ſelf againſt him that heweth therewith? or ſhall the Saw magnifie it ſelf againſt him that ſhaketh it?* is not this, *as if the Rod ſhould ſhake it ſelf againſt them that lift it up, or as if the Staff ſhould lift up it ſelf, as if it were no Wood?* Iſa. x. 15. For whether our Excellencies be natural, as Beauty, Wit, &c. or only accidental Acquiſitions, as Honour, Wealth, &c. yet ſince there is no prediſpoſition or deſert in the Subject, to determine God's Bounty, the Glory certainly of ſuch Advantages is wholly due to the Donor, who, if he had thought fit, could have made the moſt deformed Beggar as Handſome, and as Rich, as thoſe who vaunt ſo much of their Beauty and Wealth; and render'd all the Induſtry and Contrivance of the greateſt Politician, vain and inſignificant. So that all the good things we have, or can do, are to be aſcribed to God alone, he is the principal Agent, and to him therefore all the Glory belongs; and conſequently ought to be given. This was Holy *David*'s Practice, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 1, 2. *My Soul,* ſaith he, *ſhall make her boaſt in the Lord: His praiſe ſhall continually be in my Mouth*; and again, *Pſal.* xliv. 8. *In God we boaſt all the day long, and praiſe thy Name for ever.* And as he did, ſo are we exhorted to do too; for ſo ſaith St. *Paul,* 1 *Cor.* i. 31. *He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord: For not he that commendeth himſelf is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth,* 2 Cor. x. 17, 18.

XVIII. *Secondly,* It may ſerve likewiſe to ſtop, in ſome meaſure, the Mouths of ſuch vain Boaſters, to conſider Whether or no the Good that is viſible in them, exceeds that which doth as eminently appear in others? and how great the Number of thoſe may be, that equal or exceed them in the very ſame Excellencies, and Endowments, which it hath pleaſed God to beſtow upon themſelves? and this Advice alſo is given by St. *Paul,* Phil. ii. 3, 4. *Let nothing be done through Strife or Vain-glory, but in lowlineſs of Mind, let each eſteem other better than themſelves*: And to that end, he immediately adds, *Look not every Man on his own Things, but every Man alſo an the Things of others*; which if all Perſons would do, they would not be ſo continually

tinually and intently poring on their own Gifts, as to take no Notice at all of the Abilities of other Perſons, much more eminent than themſelves.

XIX. *Laſtly*, It may not a little conduce to ſuppreſs ſuch vain-glorious Boaſting, for Perſons to reflect on their paſt Follies, their preſent Vileneſs, and their future crumbling into Duſt: Let thoſe therefore who are ſo apt, either upon account of ſome Zeal, or fanſied Worth, to be exalted, caſt an Eye back on thoſe Millions of Sins and Miſcarriages they have committed, of which perhaps nevertheleſs they may not remember enough to make them either ſorrowful or aſhamed: Let them conſider, how *Corruption is their Father, and the Worm their Mother and Siſter*, Job xvii. 14. and that at beſt they are but *Duſt*, Gen. iii. 19. *and Clay*, Iſa. lxiv. 8. *inſufficient of themſelves to think, or do any thing*, 2 Cor. iii. 5. needing the help of all the Creatures, as well as the Repairs of every Day: and being continually ſo expoſed to ſo many Accidents and Calamities, as to be no longer ſafe, than whilſt they are protected by the ſame *Hand that made them*, Pſal. xciv. 17. Let them conſider likewiſe, how evil, even from their Youth, the Imaginations of their Hearts have been, *Gen.* viii. 21. and how even now they are all over *polluted and defiled*, wallowing in all manner of *Sin and Iniquity*; and *wearying themſelves in the Ways of Wickedneſs and Deſtruction*, Wiſd. v. 7. and that the Day will ſoon come when *their Breath muſt go forth*, Pſal. cxlvi. 4. *and they turn again to their Earth*, to be inſulted over by *Worms and Inſects*, Eccluſ. x. 11. and become nothing elſe but *Stench and Putrefaction* (*a*). Theſe Things, if rightly conſidered, will make Men leſs *deſirous of Vain-glory*, Gal. v. 26. eſpecially ſuch as are willing to imitate our bleſſed Saviour, whoſe Meekneſs and Humility, as it was very eminent, and conſpicuous; ſo hath he commanded all his Diſciples to learn of him, who was thus *Meek and lowly in Heart*, Mat. xi. 29. I ſhall therefore conclude with the Words of the Lord, *Jer.* ix. 23, 24. *Let not the wiſe Man glory in his Wiſdom, neither let the mighty Man glory in his Might, let not the rich Man glory in his Riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, That he underſtandeth, and knoweth me, that I am the Lord.*

(*a*) *Poſt hominem vermis, poſt vermem fœtor, & horror.*

SECT.

SECT. III.

Of Querulouſneſs, or Murmuring.

I. MUrmuring, Querulouſneſs, and Complaining, or a reſtleſsneſs and unſatisfiedneſs of Mind with our preſent Condition, is the next inordinacy of the Tongue that falls under our Conſideration; which, as well as Boaſting, ſeems to owe its riſe to that too great an Opinion Perſons are apt to conceive of themſelves, whilſt meaſuring their Enjoyments by the ſame, it is no wonder they think 'em far leſs than, and not ſo compleat as, they ought to be. Through all Ages and Degrees, among all Sorts and Conditions of Men, this querulous Humour hath too much obtained; it hath perpetually haunted the moſt magnificent Palaces, as well as the meaneſt Cottages, and purſues Emperors and Kings, as well as (if not more than) the loweſt rank of Mankind: All ſeem diſſatisfied and diſquieted with their Eſtate, let it be what it will; they ſtill think it may, and ought to be better than it is, and continually deſire (becauſe they fanſie they want) many things which they have not; and notwithſtanding Almighty God doth *daily load Mankind with his Benefits*, Pſal. lxviii. 19. yet ſo far are many from being thankful, that they are not ſo much as patient and contented: And every trival Matter, or ſlight Inconveniency, every little Neglect or Diſappointment is apt to preponderate, and out weigh that vaſt Numbers of ſubſtantial Bleſſings they enjoy. Yea, ſometimes Perſons are complaining of their not having enough, whilſt they are envied by others, as having too much; and fanſie how happy they ſhould be were they in this, or that Man's Condition, when their own may in many Reſpects be much better.

II. And ſo natural is this Corruption, and ſo cloſely interwoven with our Conſtitution, that ſometimes good Men have been overcome by it: *Jacob* was ſo paſſionately affected with the conceit of the untimely Death of *Joſeph*, that he was like, through immoderate Grief to have haſten'd his own; and being carried with the Tyde of his Diſtemper beyond himſelf, he refuſed to be comforted by the reſt of his Children; but with an obſtinate ſorrow reſolved to go down *Mourning into the Grave*, Gen. xxxvii. 35. and doth there not ſeem to have been ſome of this Leven

of

of Diſpleaſure, and diſcontent in that Speech of *Moſes* unto the Lord, *Exod.* v. 22, 23. *Wherefore haſt thou ſo evil intreated this People? Why is it that thou haſt ſent me? For ſince I came to Pharaoh to ſpeak in thy Name, he hath done Evil to this People, neither haſt thou delivered thy People at all.* An Effect of the like Frailty was it in *Elijah*, raſhly to deſire God to take him out of the World, becauſe *Jezebel* would not let him be at reſt in it, 1 *Kings* xix. 4. and of the Prophet *Jonah*, when repining at God's Mercy in ſparing *Nineveh*, and being tranſported with Anger for the *withering of the Gourds*, he ſo paſſionately put up the ſame requeſt, *Jon.* iv. 3. 8, 9. From the like ſudden Diſtemper of Paſſion and Grief, did that complaint of *Joſhua* proceed, *Joſh.* vii. 7, 8, 9. *Alas! O Lord God, wherefore haſt thou at all brought this People over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to deſtroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other ſide Jordan: Oh Lord! what ſhall I ſay, when Iſrael turneth their backs before their Enemies? For the Canaanites, and all the Inhabitants of the Land ſhall hear of it, and ſhall environ us round, and cut off our Name from the Earth, and what wilt thou do unto thy great Name? i. e.* how wilt thou preſerve the Glory of thy Name, when theſe Nations ſhall ſay, That thou wanteſt Power to protect thy People; or Truth, in failing to perform thy Promiſes.

III. Now if any ask how it comes to paſs, That ſo few live content with the Lot and Portion, which God hath aſſign'd them? it may be anſwered, That theſe Murmurings proceed even from thence, *From whence*, St. *James* ſays, *Wars and Fightings do come*, Jam. iv. 1. *viz. of thoſe Luſts that war in Mens Members*: Their inordinate Appetites and Deſires excite theſe Repinings and Diſcontents, and the greater part of thoſe numerous Complaints which we may every where meet with, owe their riſe to Pride or Ambition, Covetouſneſs, Envy, or the like. It was Pride that made *Haman* ſo uneaſie at *Mordicai's ſitting at the Kings Gate*, Eſt. v. 13. 11. his refuſing to riſe up, and bow to him, vexed *Haman's* Spirit to ſuch a degree, That he could take no Enjoyment or Delight in *the glory of his Riches, the multitude of his Children, or any of the things wherein the King had promoted him.* It is Ambition, that makes many ſo to diſlike their preſent Condition, as greedily to endeavour after a higher, let it be by what Means it will,

by

by Lying or Perjury, Bribery or Murder; there is nothing ſo horrid or ſinful, which they will ſtick at, and the leaſt Diſappointment in theſe their Purſuits makes them murmur and complain; eſpecially when they ſee others (whom they fanſie have not ſo well deſerved it) advanced to that Honour, Power, or Wealth, which themſelves wiſh to be poſſeſs'd of. It is Covetouſneſs, that makes others not to be content with ſuch Things as they have, *Heb.* xiii. 5. for no Man can be ſaid to be content, that impatiently thirſts after what he has not, which the covetous Man, who never thinks he has enough, always doth: *Ahab*, tho' poſſeſt of the *Kingdom of Iſrael*, (which was more than his *Father Omri, who was only Captain of the Hoſts*, was ever born to, 1 *Kings* xvi. 16.) yet when he could not get *Naboth's Vineyard, how heavy and diſpleaſed doth he become?* 1 *Kings* xxi 4. *laying him down upon his Bed, turned away his Face, and refuſing to eat any Bread:* And *Alexander the Great*, after he had conquer'd the whole World, was ſtill covetous of more, and as uneaſie and diſcontented, as if he had been ſtraitned for Room, or pen'd up in a Corner; verifying the Saying of the Philoſopher, '(a) That he 'who is not contented with what he hath already, would 'never be ſo though he were Lord of the Univerſe. *Laſtly*, Envy at another Man's Condition, doth often make a Perſon diſſatisfied with his own: *Ahithophel* was ſo moved with Envy againſt *Huſhai*, becauſe his Counſel was preferred before his own, and grew ſo deſperately diſcontented thereupon, as to hang himſelf.

IV. And, which is worſe yet, there is nothing more difficult than the curing ſuch Murmurers and Complainers: Meat aſſwageth Hunger, and Drink allayeth Thirſt; but as thoſe who are troubled with the Dropſie, are ſo much the dryer, (b) by how much more they drink; ſo the more is granted theſe ſort of Perſons, the leſs they are ſatisfied: Thus *Solomon* tells us, *Eccleſ.* v. 10. *He that loveth Silver, ſhall not be ſatisfied with Silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increaſe*: They are ſtill for *joining Houſe to Houſe, and laying Field to Field, till there be no place, that they*

(a) *Si cui ſua non videntur ampliſſima, licet totius mundi Dominus ſit, miſer eſt.* Epicurus apud Senec. (b) *Sic quibus intumuit ſuffuſâ venter ab undâ, Quò plus ſint potæ, plus ſitiuntur aquæ.* Ovid. Faſt. l. 1.

may

may be placed alone in the midſt of the Earth, Iſa. v. 8. *They enlarge their Deſires as Hell, and are as Death, which can never be ſatisfied*, Hab. ii. 5. but *open their Mouths without Meaſure*, Iſa. v. 14. and are no fuller for all the Souls departed, than the Sea is, for all the Rivers that empty themſelves into it: Thus *Solomon*, as among thoſe things that are never ſatisfied, he reckons *the Grave, the Earth that is not filled with Water, and the Fire that ſaith not, It is enough*, Prov. xxx. 16. ſo he tells us, *Prov.* xxvii. 20. That as *Hell and Deſtruction are never full, ſo the Eyes of Man are never ſatisfied*; yea, neither the Eyes, nor the Hearts of ſuch Murmurers ever are, but as Oil, or Fewel caſt on the Fire doth not quench or ſmother it, but feed it, and make it burn fiercer than it did before; ſo the greedy and inſatiable Deſire of ſuch diſcontented Perſons, is rather encreaſed, than leſſen'd by ſuch Additions. Now, what greater Injury, or Affront can be offered to Almighty God, than with ſuch an unbecoming Boldneſs to diſpute his Allotments and Diſtributions? To arraign his Providence, and impiouſly charge him with Impotency, or Folly? For to be diſpleaſed with his Diſpenſations, to blame and diſlike his Proceedings, is in effect, to charge God with Miſdemeanour; to ſay we are wiſer than he, and could govern the World, and manage Matters much better; and will not permit him to do what he will with his own, *Mat.* xx. 15. No wonder therefore we find ſuch Murmurers and Complainers, who are always finding Fault with other Mens Condition, and yet never content with their own, ſo ſeverely condemn'd, *Jude, v.* 16. yea, and puniſhed too; witneſs the People of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, on whom God, (as you may read in ſeveral Places of *Exodus* and *Numbers*) did inflict many ſharp and heavy Puniſhments on this Account; and therefore Saint *Paul* adviſeth us, 1 *Cor.* x. 10, 11. *Not to murmur, as ſome of them murmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer*; for as he immediately adds, *All theſe things happen'd unto them for Examples, and are written for our Admonition.*

V. With what excellent Lectures of Acquieſcence, and Contentment do the Writings, even of the wiſer Heathens abound? And how happy would all Perſons be, if they could not only quietly, and patiently, but freely, and

cheerfully cloſe with that Eſtate, and Condition of Life, whatever it be, that Divine Providence ſhall think fit to place them in, without any Murmuring or Repining, without any Envy, Covetouſneſs, or Ambition, aiming greedily at no more than what they already poſſeſs, and thankfully receiving, whatſoever God ſends? For certainly it is our Duty, as well as it was theirs, intirely to depend upon Providence, and curb, and confine our Appetites, and Deſires, within ſuch bounds, as Nature, and our preſent State ſhall require; never to appear diſſatisfied in the leaſt, but with alacrity, and Courage to proceed in our Affairs, whatſoever Straits or Diſappointments we may go thorough, or meet with; *caſting our Burden, and care ſtill upon God*, 1 Pet. v. 7. and diligently abſtaining from all unlawfull, and unworthy Methods of removing our Croſſes, or our wants; chooſing rather to continue poor, than grow rich by Robbery or Wrong; and quietly to abide among thoſe of the loweſt rank, rather than by unwarrantable Means, or ſordid Compliances to endeavour to raiſe their Fortunes, and move in a higher Sphere.

VI. For true Happineſs doth not conſiſt in what are commonly called the Gifts of Fortune; not in Riches, Dignity or Power; not in Glory or Fame, but in a contented Mind, which alone can make a Man truly rich: (*a*) and this he certainly is who wants the feweſt things, and he wants the feweſt things who meaſures his abundance by the Neceſſities of Nature, and not by the extravagance of irregular Deſires. Beſides, how can real Happineſs be derived from fading Riches, by the very poſſeſſion whereof a Man is ſo often deprived of his Security and quiet? *Eccleſ.* v. 12. or from Dignity and Power, in which, were there any thing of proper, or natural Good, they would not ſo often fall to the ſhare of wicked Men, who, though they command others, have yet no command of themſelves, but are the Slaves of their Vices, and the Servants of Corruption, 2 *Pet.* ii. 1. *for to whom Men yield themſelves Servants to obey, his Servants they are to whom they obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteouſneſs*, 2 *Pet.* ii. 1. And then, from the empty Applauſe of the

(*a*) *Satis eſt divitiarum nihil amplius velle. Contentum ſuis rebus eſſe maximæ ſunt, certiſſimæq; divitiæ.* Cic. *Paradox.*

People,

People, from the partial Breath, and vain Diſcourſes of the many is there as little good to be expected: What Advantage could ever yet accrue by a great Name, to the moſt deſerving Perſon, after his Body was reſolved into Duſt? And do the moſt ſplendid Titles make any Diſtinction, between one and the other in the Grave? Or give any real Pleaſure or Satisfaction? No, the Souls of ſuch, being once enlarged from their Earthly Priſons, immediately ſoar up on high, and being entred the Manſions of bliſs, are ſo far from regarding this World, and the Buſineſſes thereof, that they rather rejoyce in being freed from all ſublunary Concerns.

VII. If indeed Wealth, or Honour, or the like Acceſſions could place men in ſuch a State of Happineſs, that nothing could be wanting to compleat their Felicity, then thoſe who ſo earneſtly thirſt after them, would be leſs to be blamed; but ſince the contrary is ſo ſufficiently known, even to thoſe who poſſeſs them in the greateſt Meaſure, why ſhould any ſo greedily deſire them, or be ſo impatient when they have them not? Why ſhould Murmuring thruſt out Contentment, which is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the comfortable Enjoyment of our Lives and Poſſeſſions, that it is impoſſible to be happy without it, how plentifully ſoever we may be furniſhed beſides; and with which he that is endued, cannot be called miſerable, whatever other Things he may ſeem to want. I ſay ſeem to want, becauſe he that is truly content, doth really want nothing; whilſt the poſſeſſion of the whole World, with a diſcontented Mind, and inſatiable Deſires is no better than a more ſpecious ſort of Poverty; yea, 'tis alſo *Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit*, Eccleſ. ii. 26. For as in the Stomach, when clog'd with Meat agreeing not therewith, the ſame there remains undigeſted, and becomes not only unpleaſant and unprofitable (as affording neither good Reliſh or ſound Nouriſhment) but proving rather burthenſome and prejudicial to the whole Body; ſo Diſcontent renders all that a Man hath (be it never ſo much) unſavoury, or diſtaſtful: It becomes a Burthen, rather than any way a Benefit unto him; he hath no Pleaſure, or Delight therein at all, but his Mind is ſo carried after ſomething that he ſtill deſires, and hath not; that he no more regards what he already hath, than if he never had it; whilſt on the other hand

Contentment gives a Man a comfortable, quiet, and pleaſant Fruition of what he poſſeſſeth: For let his Condition be what it will, ſuch a one ſuits and adapts his Deſires, and Inclinations to the ſame: If he have Wealth, he ſuffers not either the Care of preſerving it, the deſire of encreaſing it, or the Unwillingneſs to make uſe of it, to bereave him of that Satisfaction he may reap from the ſame; if he be poor, he is frugal, provident, and induſtrious, ſparing in his Deſires, willing to take Pains, and patient under whatſoever Hardſhips he may meet with: In a word, he is always careful to ſquare, and model his Mind, and Affections exactly according to his preſent Circumſtances, and in ſo doing becomes happy.

VIII. We are by the Apoſtle exhorted, *Heb.* xiii. 5. To *let our Converſation be without Covetouſneſs, and to be content with ſuch Things as we have*, and fully ſatisfied with whatever God ſhall allow us; and one would think we ſhould need no Perſwaſions to put our ſelves in ſo bleſſed a State; Contentment being the real Elixir of Life, and that true Philoſopher's Stone which makes Gold of any Thing; by reducing it to a right Temper, it cures all the Diſeaſes of the Soul; and to him that is endued therewith, the not deſiring the Pleaſures or Goods of this World is the ſame Thing with Advantage, as the enjoying them is to others: This ſatisfies all his needs, and fills all his Vacuities: Such a Man is happy any where, and whilſt he is thus pleaſed in himſelf, how can he be better? For the largeſt Poſſeſſions, or greateſt Proſperity can yield nothing more eligible than Satisfaction of Mind; and this he always enjoys: When Things happen not as he would, then he wills as they happen; and let there be never ſo great Occaſions or Temptations to Diſpleaſure, he is ſtill quiet and compoſed, keeps all his Paſſions in due Order, and will not ſuffer his Tongue to murmur or complain in the leaſt. Now, there are ſeveral Things, which if duely conſidered, will very much help to this happy frame of Spirit; as

IX. If in the firſt Place, Men would compare their own Condition with that of their Neighbours (*a*), they would many times find Reaſon not only not to murmur,

(*a*) *Cùm tibi diſpliceat rerum fortuna tuarum, Alterius ſpecta quò ſis diſcrimine pejor.* Cato *de Mor.* l. 4. §. 32.

but

but to rejoyce in their own Portion, which in many Reſpects perhaps may be much better, than that of thoſe they ſo much admire. For as we ſhall ſcarce find any ſo miſerable, but we may meet with ſome, that would gladly change Conditions with them; ſo there is none ſo happy, but to ſome his way of Life would be burthenſome; and there are many who are even envied of others, and yet think themſelves rather worthy of their Pity and Compaſſion. How many of the richer ſort that are ſickly and infirm, would part with their Wealth, for that Health and Ability of Body their poor Neighbours enjoy? Or if they have Health, they may want thoſe Olive-plants round their Tables, *Pſal.* cxxviii. 3. who do ſo adorn the meaner Cottages; and then they are uneaſy on that Account, and with *Rachel* cry, *Give us Children, or elſe we die,* Gen. xxx. 1. *Socrates* was wont to ſay, "If every one would bring "his Misfortunes into a publick Stock, to be ſhared alike "among all Men, the greateſt part of thoſe who now "murmur and complain ſo much, would be contented, "and glad to keep their own." But then we muſt not only caſt an Eye on others Enjoyments, and our own Wants, but alſo, that chiefly we are to conſider our own Enjoyments, and the Wants of others; and yet are they not commonly more apt with an evil and envious Eye to look upward toward thoſe few who ſeem to exceed them in ſome of the Advantages of Life, and then to murmur and repine at their own ſcanty Fortune; than they are to look down on the far greater number, who as to worldly Accommodations are far beneath them, though they may deſerve as well, if not better, at God's Hand's than themſelves: If they have two or three Neighbours of greater Eſtates, then they are always thinking themſelves in an evil Caſe, becauſe, not having the like yearly Income, they cannot fare as the others fare, and do as they do; without ever conſidering, that for thoſe two or three rich, how many poor and needy are on every ſide of them, and come as far ſhort of them as they do of others: When they ſee any carried in a Chair, or on Mens Shoulders, they are ſo wholly took up with the Pageantry and Show, as not to regard thoſe that carry him, or run through thick and thin along by him; and their Eyes are ſo dazled with the Luſtre of a few Kings and Princes of the Earth, that

they cannot diſcern thoſe vaſt multitudes of poor Wretches, that row in the Gallies, and tug at the Oar under the Whip, and in Chains, naked, and half ſtarved, to ſupport their Grandeur.

X. But if we would ſtrictly and impartially ſurvey the State of all others, and compare our Caſe with thoſe many Millions, who are in Baniſhment, or in Priſon, in Slavery and Want, being wholly diſpoſſeſt of all comfortable Subſiſtence, and moſt miſerably *deſtitute, afflicted, and tormented*, Heb. xi. 37. our Condition then would not appear ſo bad as to make us murmur and complain; ſince we are not only Men of the ſame Nature, but Sinners too, as well as they; and what reaſon can we then have to expect to be exempted from thoſe common Evils to which all Mankind is obnoxious; and from which the beſt Men have been ſo far from being freed, that thoſe who have been moſt eminent and illuſtrious for Piety and Goodneſs, have ſuffered moſt: *Which of the Prophets*, ſaith St. *Stephen* to the Jews, *Acts* vii. 52. *have not your Fathers perſecuted?* and were not the Apoſtles, as St. *Paul* obſerves, 1 *Cor.* iv. 9, &c. *ſet forth as Men appointed unto Death, being defamed and reviled, being buffeted and perſecuted, wandring about hungry, thirſty and naked, without any certain dwelling place; being made as the Filth of the World, and the Off-ſcouring of all Things*; yea, was not Chriſt himſelf *deſpiſed, and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief?* Iſa. liii. 3. and *not having a place where to lay his Head*, Mat. viii. 20. which calls to mind the Saying of an eminent Divine, with which I ſhall conclude this Particular Conſideration: "No Man, ſays he *(a)*, will have "cauſe to complain of his courſe Robe, if he re- "members the ſwadling Cloths of Chriſt; nor to be diſ- "quieted at his hard Bed, when he conſiders Jeſus laid in "a Manger; nor to be diſcontented at his thin Table, "when he calls to mind the King of Heaven, and Earth, "fed with a little Breaſt-milk.

XI. Secondly, Such Murmurers would alſo do well to conſider, that their Condition, be it what it will, is ordered by a God of infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, who

(a) Dr. Jer. Taylor's *Life and Death of the Holy Jeſus*, P. I. §. 3. p. 30. Lond. 1653.

being

being much better able to chooſe for us, than we for our ſelves, and willing alſo that we ſhould be happy: It muſt be granted, that the Eſtate he is pleaſed to allot us, muſt certainly be the beſt, and moſt convenient for us: The Cup that is given us to drink is mix'd, and preſented by the Heavenly Father, who *doth not willingly afflict, nor grieve the Children of Men*, Lam. iii. 33. but hath always ſome Good in view; and therefore one (*a*) gives this Advice,

Take well what e're ſhall chance, tho' bad it be,
Take it for good, and 'twill be ſo to thee.

This Conſideration made holy *Job* ſo patient under all his Sufferings, he knew that *Affliction did not come forth of the Duſt*, Job v. 6. *and that Trouble did not ſpring out of the Ground*; but proceeds from that Lord of all, who doth *form the Light, and create Darkneſs, who maketh Peace, and createth Evil*, Iſa. xlv. 7. and therefore, when News was brought of the Loſs of his Children and Goods, he only confeſſeth, That *it was the ſame Lord that gave, that had likewiſe taken them away*, and bleſſeth God for the Enjoyment ſo long, *Job* i. 21. ſo *David*, when *Shimei* curſed him, made only this Reply, *Let him curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, curſe* David, *who then ſhall ſay wherefore haſt thou done ſo?* 2 Sam. xvi. 10. and our bleſſed Saviour, *John* xviii. 11. *The Cup which my Father hath given me*, ſaith he, *ſhall I not drink it?* They raiſed their Minds above all ſecond Cauſes, plainly perceiving, and openly acknowledging God's hand, and that was enough to make them keep their Mouths as it were with a *Bridle, leſt they ſhould ſin with their Tongues*, Pſal. xxxix. 1. For *the Lord is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works*, Pſal. cxlv. 17. *all his Paths are Mercy and Truth*, Pſal. xxv. 10. and therefore we may be aſſured that whatſoever he orders and appoints, is moſt wholeſome and profitable for us; and conſequently ought to think our preſent Condition to be the beſt, becauſe determined, and aſſigned us by him, who not only loves us better (*b*) than we do our ſelves, but alſo far better underſtands what is good for us.

XII. Thus holy *David* found by Experience, that *it was good for him that he had been afflicted, that he might learn*

(*a*) Randolph. (*b*) *Charior eſt illis homo quam ſibi*, Juv. Sat. 10.

God's Statutes, Pſal. cxix. 71. and the wiſe man tells us, *Eccluſ.* ii. 5. That *as Gold is tried in the Fire, ſo are acceptable Men in the Furnace of Adverſity*: This is the true School of Wiſdom; this is the Method God makes uſe of to reclaim Sinners, as being the moſt effectual; and this is that which to many hath proved more wholeſome, and beneficial, than the greateſt Proſperity; and therefore all ſuch Occurrences, how grievous ſoever they may ſeem, ought to be entertained with an entire Submiſſion, becauſe ſent from God, to whoſe bleſſed Will we are obliged to reſign our own, without the leaſt Repining, or Complaint, patiently waiting till he ſhall think fit to remove, or alleviate our Afflictions, and not grieving as thoſe who have no Hope, 1 *Theſ.* iv. 13. for who knows how ſoon the ſame God that hath ſhewed us great Troubles and Adverſities may turn again, and refreſh us, and comfort us on every ſide? Or however, ſince we our ſelves are mortal, the Evils we undergo cannot be perpetual; our Life it ſelf will ſoon be at an end, and with it all our worldly Troubles will vaniſh: If our Days be full of Trouble, yet they are alſo few (*a*), and that affords Comfort and Encouragement *to wait all the Days of our appointed time till our Change come*, Job xiv. 1, 14. In a word, we muſt not lay claim to God's Bleſſings, and account them as our own by Preſcription, but we muſt render him Thanks for permitting us to have them ſo long (*b*), and quietly part with them, whenſoever he ſhall call for them again; and *as Sheep before their Shearers are dumb*, Iſa. liii. 7. and the faithful *Hebrews took joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods, knowing that they had in Heaven, a better, and more enduring Subſtance*, Heb. x. 34. ſo we are to be *dumb, and not open our Mouths, becauſe it is the Lord's doing*, Pſal. xxxix. 9. being fully aſſured, that he doth all for our Good, as well in witholding, or withdrawing his Bleſſings from us; as in conferring them upon, or in continuing them unto us.

XIII. It may not be improper in this Caſe to conſider alſo thirdly, how unworthy we are of the leaſt of all God's Mercies which we do enjoy, *Gen.* xxxii. 10. and

(*a*) *Omnia brevia tolerabilia eſſe debent, etiamſi magna.* Cic. *Læl.* (*b*) *Non mœremus quòd talem amiſimus, ſed gratias agimus, quòd habuimus.* *Hieron.* Epitaph. Paulæ.

then,

then, inſtead of Murmuring, that they are no more, we ſhall rather find reaſon to praiſe God, and admire his Bounty, that they are ſo many: We are far from deſerving any thing from God; and that all we have from him is of his free Gift, we are taught in that Prayer wherein we are commanded to deſire him to give (*a*) us our daily Bread, and taught to beg it at his hands, *Mat.* vi. 11. now, as we commonly ſay, Beggars are not to be Chooſers, ſo certainly we are not to be our own Carvers; and if we deſerve not ſo much as a bit of Bread at God's Hands, then certainly we ought not to complain, if we be not *clothed in Purple, and fine Linen, and do not fare ſumptuouſly every Day*, Luke xvi. 19. we ought not to grumble, *and grudge if we be not ſatisfied*, Pſal. lix. 15. and unleſs we have wherewithal to revel, and riot, *and conſume upon our Luſts*, Jam. iv. 3. Let it be more or leſs, which God is pleaſed to allot us, yet ſtill it is more than we deſerve, or can lay claim to: We, who are ſuch *unprofitable Servants*, Luke xvii. 10. that our very beſt Performances do rather need Pardon, than merit any Reward; we, who are *unworthy the Crums that fall from our Maſter's Table*, Mat. xv. 27. and the common Benefits which all Mankind enjoys. How can thoſe, who have ſo often tranſgreſſed God's Laws, and ſo long abuſed his Patience, pretend to be uneaſy, or hardly dealt with, if they do not always ſwim in plenty, and wallow in delight; when *it is of the Lord's Mercies that they are not conſumed*, and *becauſe his Compaſſions fail not*, that they are on this ſide the Grave, *Lam.* iii. 22. and therefore the ſame Prophet a little after expoſtulates thus, *v.* 39. *Wherefore doth a living Man murmur or complain for the Puniſhment of his Sins?* We ought rather with the Prophet *Micah* to ſay, *We will bear the Indignation of the Lord, becauſe we have ſinned againſt him*, Mic. vii. 9. ſeeing, let our Troubles, or Sufferings be what they will, yet we muſt confeſs that *God hath puniſhed us leſs than our Iniquities have deſerved*, Ezra ix. 13. yea, it is our Fault that we ſuffer ſo much as we do: *For the Lord doth not willingly afflict, or grieve the Children of Men*, Lam. iii. 33. his Bounty, and Kindneſs indeed flow freely

(*a*) *Da, non redde, quia niſi Deo donante noſter non eſt.* Aug. Hom 14.

from

from that *Fountain of living Waters*, Jer. ii. 13. but his Harſhneſs and Severity proceed from ſomewhat in our ſelves, and our Sufferings are the natural Products of our Sins; *For*, as the Prophet ſays, *our Sins may with-hold good things from us*, Jer. v. 25. ſo the Pſalmiſt tells us, Pſal. cvii. 17. That *Fools, i. e. Sinners, becauſe of their Tranſgreſſions, and becauſe of their Iniquities are afflicted.*

XIV. Neither will Perſons be ſo apt to murmur and complain, if they likewiſe, in the Fourth Place, conſider the Vanity of all worldly Things and Poſſeſſions: How little true Satisfaction there is in the moſt ample Revenues, the greateſt Honours, or the moſt ſenſual Delights; and how ſhort a Time they can enjoy them: The Poſſeſſions of this World are but an empty ſhew, and it is only an imaginary kind of Happineſs which the Honourable, the Rich, or the reſt, we are ſo wont to admire, do enjoy. The Lives of thoſe who poſſeſs the largeſt Empires and Dominions, are at beſt but gaudy Troubles, their Crowns are beſet indeed with Pearls and Jewels, but then they are alſo ſtuft with Care, and to ſhew how vain a thing Soveraignty is (how beautiful ſoever it may outwardly appear) we need only call to mind how many ſuch Potentates have been unable to preſerve themſelves as well from being Murther'd as Depoſed. As for Riches, *Solomon* (who had as much of them as any Man) hath ſufficiently ſhew'd the *Vanity of them*, Eccleſ. v. 10, *&c.* and the reaſonableneſs of his Father's Exhortation, *Pſal.* lxii. 10. *Not to ſet our hearts upon them*; and indeed Mammon is a Lord, in Fanſie and Opinion only, and an inſignificant Idol of Man's own (*a*) ſetting up: Neither have Riches any Worth or Value, but what our Luſts and Deſires ſet upon them; *they are diſquieting and deceitful*, Pſal. xxxix. 6. Mark iv. 19. *they fly away preſently*, Prov. xxiii. 5. and remain not from *Generation to Generation*, Prov. xxvii. 24. they can ſtand us in no ſtead at the Day of Death or Judgment; neither can *they profit in the Day of Wrath*, Prov. xi. 4. for God Almighty neither *eſteems Riches nor Gold*, Job xxxvi. 19. and ſo far is the wealthy Man from being able to *redeem his Brother, or give unto God a ranſom for him*, Pſal. xlix. 6, 7. That *as the Flower of the Graſs paſſeth away, and the Grace*

(*a*) *Te facimus Fortuna Deam.*

of

of the Faſhion thereof periſheth, Jam. i. 10, 11. *ſo doth the rich Man fade in his Ways; and they that ſpend their Days in Wealth, go down in a Moment to their Graves*, Job xxi. 13.

XV. As for Honour and worldly Glory, the ſame may be ſaid of that alſo; for ſo St. *Peter* tells us, That *all the Glory of Man is as the Flower of the Graſs*, 1 Pet. i. 24. and the Pſalmiſt, That *Man being in honour abideth not, but is like the Beaſts that periſh*, Pſal. xlix. 12. The wiſe Heathen (*a*) could find nothing at all in Glory to make it deſirable, and perhaps one reaſon for his ſaying ſo was, what he elſewhere (*b*) mentions, becauſe it ſo ſoon vaniſheth away and is gone, paſſing away like a Cloud before the Wind: It is a meer Blaſt, and an empty Bubble; a Shew without Subſtance; and a glorious Nothing; yea, it is leſs valuable than meer Emptineſs, and nothing it ſelf: For ſo the Pſalmiſt (who was one of the moſt conſiderable among them) ſpeaking of Men of high Degree, ſays, *They are lighter than Vanity it ſelf*, Pſal. lxii. 9. And as for Pleaſure, that alſo is but a temporary Fruition, *it is but for a Seaſon*, Heb. xi. 25. For *as the crackling of the Thorns under a Pot*, ſays the wiſe Man, *Eccleſ.* vii. 6. *ſo is the Laughter of a Fool*: It may by loud perhaps, but then it is but a Blaze, neither for any Uſe, nor of any Duration, and therefore he there concludes this alſo *to be Vanity*: And however vitious Perſons, and voluptuous Epicures may take their fill of all kind of ſenſual Pleaſures, ſlaying Oxen and killing Sheep, eating Fleſh and drinking Wine, and encouraging themſelves therein; yet it immediately follows, *to Morrow we ſhall dye.*

XVI. In ſhort, all the exteriour Luſtre of the World, which ſo charms the Eyes of Man, is no better than a painted Cloud; in this Region of Inconſtancy, neither Things nor Perſons continue the ſame long together: All *Things that we can ſee are but temporary*, 2 Cor. iv. 18. and whatſoever Solitude or Subſtantialneſs, may be fanſied to be in any of theſe worldly Poſſeſſions, yet their very want of Duration, and being ſo quickly gone, render them vain, and leſs deſirable: The *World*, ſaith St. *John*, and the

(*a*) *Nihil in ſe habet gloria, cur expetatur.* Cic. Tuſc qu. p. 47. l. 1. (*b*) *Non modò non æternam, ſed ne diuturnam quidem gloriam aſſequi poſſumus.* Cic. Offic. l. 2.

Luſt

Luſt, or *Deſire* thereof paſſeth away; and therefore he exhorts us, not to love the World, neither the Things that are in the World, which we can but enjoy for ſo ſhort a Time, and from which we muſt ſo ſuddenly part. *Solomon* who knew, and made as much of the World as any Man, pronounces all to be *but Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit*, Eccleſ. ii. 17. and what then can any others expect to find, of which they ſhould be very fond, ſince therein none ever yet found any thing wherewith they could be fully pleaſed. This World is ſo far from being a Place of perfect Eaſe, and pure Delight, that it is a Region of Troubles and Diſaſters, of Difficulties and Hazards, on purpoſe, perhaps, to prevent our ſetting our Affections too much upon it, and being unwilling to leave it. This Particular therefore I ſhall conclude with the Words of the Pious *Thomas à Kempis*, " (*a*) Vanity moſt certainly it is, " with great ſolitude to ſeek, and place our Hope and " Confidence in Riches, which are ſure to periſh. Vani- " ty to cheriſh our Ambition, and ſtrive, by all poſſible " Means, to attain an high and honourable Station. Va- " nity to indulge the Deſires of the Fleſh, and court thoſe " Pleaſures, which draw after them grievous and laſting " Pains. Vanity moſt exquiſite, to be infinitely concern'd " for living long, and perfectly indifferent, or but coldly " affected concerning living well. Vanity moſt fatal and " ſtupid, to determine our Thoughts and Cares to this " Life preſent, and never look forward to that which is to " come: To dote upon Things that fly ſwiftly from us, " and cling faſt about imaginary and tranſitory Delights; " while we ſuffer our ſelves by theſe to be detain'd, and " diverted from the purſuit of ſubſtantial and eternal " Joys.

XVII. Laſtly, Let ſuch Murmurers conſider, with how little, or how few Things (*b*) Nature is content, with which if they would be content too, they need never complain, becauſe they need never want them: The wiſe Man ſays, Eccluſ. xxix. 21. *The chief thing for Life is Water*

(*a*) Th. à Kemp. *Imitation of Chriſt*. l. 1. c. 1. p. 3. *Of Dr.* Stanhope's *Tranſlation*. Lond. 1700. Ed. 2. (*b*) *Parva, & pauca ſunt, quæ natura deſiderat.* Cic. Tuſc. qu. l. 3. p. 130. Lond. 1599.

and

and Bread, and Clothing, and an Houſe to cover Shame; and with ſuch a Competency, or with ſo much as may ſerve to maintain our Life, without intolerable Pain, we ought to be ſatisfy'd. For what (*a*) ſignifies it to one, who is thus contented to live, whether he have Hundreds a Year, or Thouſands? He knows that if he have convenient Food and Raiment, he hath as much as the moſt wealthy Monarch upon Earth can enjoy: For as when the Children of *Iſrael gather'd Manna*, Exod. xvi. 17, 18. *though ſome gathered more, and ſome leſs; yet when they came to meaſure it, he that gathered much, had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack, but every Man had his Omer according to his eating:* So though ſome heap up more Wealth, and others leſs, yet he that heaps up moſt can have for his own Perſon no more than one Man's Allowance: Let him threſh never ſo many Thouſand (*b*) Quarters of Corn, let him have Thouſands of fat Oxen, and fed Beaſts in his Paſtures and Stalls, and Ten thouſands of Sheep in his Folds and his Fields, yet his Belly can hold no more than another Man's may; the reſt of it goes to others, for where there is much Meat, there are many Mouths; and where there is much Wealth, there are the more to partake of it, according to the Words of *Solomon*, Eccleſ. v. 11. *When Goods increaſe, they are increaſed that eat them: and what Good is there to the Owners thereof, ſaving the beholding of them with their Eyes.*

XVIII. This was all *Horace* deſired, (*c*) Homely, but wholſome Food, and ſuch Garments as would defend him from the Cold, though they were never ſo coarſe: This was all *Agur* requeſted, Prov. xxx. 8. *Only to be fed with Food convenient for him*: This was all that *Jacob* prayed for, Gen. xxviii. 20. *Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on*: And according to St. *Paul*'s Judgment this is enough, for ſays he, 1 *Tim.* vi. 7, 8. *We brought nothing into the World, and it is certain we can carry nothing out: And therefore having Food and Raiment, let us be therewith content.* And ſo certainly we ſhall, if we do but contemplate our Bleſſed

(*a*) *Quid referat intra Naturæ fines viventi jugera centum, An mille aret.* Hor. *Sermon.* 1. Sat. 1. (*b*) *Millia frumenti*, &c. ibid. (*c*) *Sit mihi menſa tripes, & Concha ſalis puri, & toga, quæ*, &c. ibid. l. 1. Sat. 3.

Maſter,

Maſter, the Holy Jeſus, and conſider what he accounted enough, and with how little he was ſatisfied, when without doubt he might have had more. It was a Saying of *Socrates*, (*a*) He is neareſt the Gods, (who need nothing) that doth need the feweſt Things: And it is generally agreed, That a Man that hath a little, and is contented therewith, is much happy than he that hath large Poſſeſſions, and is ſtill not ſatisfied: As the Poet (*b*) tells us *Diogenes* was more happy in his Tub, than *Alexander the Great*, who was not contented unleſs he had the whole World; yea, it ſeems, nor then neither. The wiſe Man therefore exhorts every Man to be contented with what he has; whether it *be little or much*, Eccluſ. xxix. 23. and indeed, he that is not content in any State, will be content in none at all; to thoſe that reckon right, a little is enough; to thoſe who reckon wrong, nothing is ſo: And he that doth not think his own Eſtate, how ſmall and ſlender ſoever it may be, to be large enough, will ſtill be miſerable, though he were Lord of the Univerſe; for the Fault is in the Mind, not in the Things poſſeſſed, and he is Rich enough, who deſires no more: So *Horace* (*c*) will not have him that hath large Revenues to be accounted ſo happy, as he that with a quiet and ſedate Mind makes a right uſe of God's Bleſſings whilſt he hath them; and can as quietly give them back again, when it ſhall pleaſe God to demand them.

XIX. Theſe Things, if duely conſidered, may ſomewhat avail to reduce ſuch Murmurers to a better Mind; eſpecially if they would likewiſe weigh, 1ſt. How ingratefully and diſingenuouſly they behave themſelves towards God, (from whoſe pure Bounty all *good things do flow*, Jam. i. 17.) when inſtead of returning him Thanks for freely conferring upon them many Bleſſings, to which they had no Right or Title, they fret and complain becauſe they have no more: And notwithſtanding he hath ſo expreſly commanded us, not to be careful for the *Things of this World*, Matt. vi. 25. and hath ſo often promiſed never to leave

(*a*) Ὁ ἐλαχίστων δεόμενος, ἔγγιστα θεῶν. Socrat. *in* Xenoph. (*b*) *Hoc Senſit* Alexander *teſta cum vidit in illa Magnum*, &c. Juvenal. (*c*) *Non poſſidentem multa vocâris Rectè beatum: rectius*, &c. Hor. l. 4. Od. 9.

us

us deſtitute, or forſake us, but to be always ready at hand to defend, ſuccour, and do us good: Yet they are *of ſo little Faith*, Matt. xiv. 31. as forgetting all his paſt Miracles of Mercy and Bounty, to diſtruſt his Providence, and queſtion whether he be able or willing to perform his Promiſe: Like the inconſiderate and ungrateful *Jews*, *Who remembred not God's Hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the Enemy*, Pſ. lxxviii. 42. *nor the multitude of his Mercies*, Pſal. cvi. 7. but ſpeak againſt God, ſaying, *Can God furniſh a Table in the Wilderneſs? Can he give Bread alſo*, or *provide Fleſh for his People*, Pſal. lxxviii. 19, 20. whereas we are exhorted by St. *Peter*, to *caſt all our Care upon God, for he careth for us*, 1 Pet. v. 7. and to *commit the keeping of our Souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator*, 1 Pet. iv. 19. and by the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, to *be content with ſuch things as we have, becauſe he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5. 2d. Such a querulous Temper is very indecent in reſpect of others, to whom we ought to pay a greater Deference, than to entertain them with nothing elſe, but mournful Complaints, which alſo cannot but render our Company very unacceptable. 3d. "It muſt likewiſe be painful, and unpleaſant "to a Man's ſelf, to be always dipping his Tongue in Gall, "as one (*a*) words it, and to have nothing in his Mouth, "but the extract and exhalation of inward Bitterneſs: If ſuch a one did but conſult his own Eaſe, he would turn his Murmuring into Thankſgiving, which as the Pſalmiſt ſays, is not only *a good thing*, Pſal. xcii. 1. but alſo *pleaſant and joyful*. 4th. Such an unmanly Patience, ſuch a querulous Whining, is a Sign of a mean and cowardly Spirit: For true Fortitude ſurmounts all Difficulties, and maintains it ſelf againſt the rudeſt Encounters: He that is *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might*, Eph. vi. 10. values not the Frowns of Fortune, but undauntedly withſtands the fierceſt Oppoſition he meets with in his Way to Heaven: He fears not tho' the Earth be moved, and tho' the Hills be carried into the midſt of the Sea: *For he ſets the Lord always before him, and knowing he ſhall never be moved, becauſe he is at his right hand: His Heart therefore is glad, and his Glory rejoyceth, his Fleſh alſo doth reſt in hope*, Pſal. xvi. 8, 9. *Laſtly*, As it is diſingenuous and unſeemly,

(*a*) *Government of the Tongue.* §. 10. p. 181. Oxon. 1675.

uneaſie

uneaſie and mean, ſo likewiſe it is very vain and inſignificant; all our Complaints are ineffectual, all our Murmuring is to no purpoſe, all our Fretting and Vexing can do no good: Our mournful Clamours cannot make the leaſt Change in the Courſe of Things, our paſſionate Reſentments cannot ſtop the Current of Affairs, our greateſt Care and Solitude cannot alter our Condition, or make one Hair naturally, and of it ſelf, *White or Black*, that was not ſo before, *Matt.* v. 36. This repining at our Fortune is ſo far from eaſing or helping us, that it may tend rather to the Continuance, if not increaſe of our Preſſures, whilſt we thus diſpleaſe him, who is only able to remove them.

XX. Let us then by a juſt contempt of theſe worldly Vanities, raiſe up our drooping Souls to the Deſires and Endeavours after the Kingdom of Heaven, which we ought to look upon as our proper Home, and this World only as an Inn, in our Paſſage thither, where if we meet with any tolerable Uſage or Accommodation, it is as much as can be expected: Let us conſider to how little purpoſe it is to miſpend our Thoughts, and throw away our Inclinations upon *things that can neither profit*, Jer. ii. 8. *nor give content*; in the Fruition whereof, true Happineſs and entire Satisfaction is ſo far from conſiſting, that oftentimes the very Poſſeſſion doth pall and deaden the Deſire of them. And therefore let us, after the Example of the Primitive Saints, thoſe Illuſtrious Patterns of Mortification, and true Holineſs, *Set our Affections on Things above, not on Things on the Earth*, Col. iii. 2. and *not look at the Things which are ſeen, but the Things which are not ſeen*, as knowing very well, that *the Things which are ſeen are Temporal, but the Things which are not ſeen are Eternal*, 2 Cor. iv. 18. let us wean our Souls from the deſpicable Vanities of this Life, the bewitching Pleaſures of Senſe, and the glitering Gayeties of the World, and ſoar up on high to nobler Enjoyments, and Things that are infinitely more precious and deſirable; let us no longer delight our ſelves in theſe earthly Vanities, and empty Shadows, *but earneſtly covet better Things*, 1 Cor. xii. 31. Things that are more durable and ſubſtantial; let us diſengage our Affections from, and learn to deſpiſe and abandon ſuch mean groſs Objects, and keep our Hearts and Eyes intent upon eternal Joys, and thoſe *Pleaſures that are at God's right hand for evermore*,

Pſal.

Pſal. xvi. 11. always remembring that whilſt we are in this Life, we are in a State of Travel, and on our Journey through a *Valley of Tears, and of the Shadow of Death*, Pſal. xxiii. 4. to a much *better Country*, Heb. xi. 16. a Place of undiſturbed Repoſe, and infinite Happineſs, which will abundantly make amends for whatſoever Difficulties and Hardſhips we meet with in the way; and where we ſhall be for ever employed in ſinging Hallelujahs *to the Father of Mercies*, 2 Cor. i. 3. *and God of all Comfort*; if we ſuffer not that Breath which was given us to magnify God's Bounty, and Goodneſs, to be made uſe of to murmur at his Diſpenſations; and do not by our froward Repinings provoke him ſo to anger, as to make him ſwear *we ſhall never enter into his reſt*, Heb. iv. 3.

XXI. The wiſe Man therefore exhorts us to *beware of Murmurings, which are unprofitable*, Wiſd. i. 11. and Saint *Paul*, To *do all things without Murmurings*; Phil. ii. 14. and indeed, if we conſider right, and reflect upon what hath been already ſaid, we can find no real Cauſe of Diſcontent, and that it ſhews great Weakneſs to be diſturb'd and diſſatisfy'd at what we cannot help: To prevent which the beſt way is what the Pſalmiſt hath mark'd out, To *truſt in the Lord, and be doing good*, Pſal. xxxvii. 3.

XXII. Firſt, we muſt be doing: The Son of *Sirach* tells us, *Eccluſ.* xxxiii. 27. That *Idleneſs teacheth much Evil*; and truly I am apt to think, that it tends not a little to nouriſh Diſcontent, by laying a Man's Mind to open melancholy Thoughts, and depriving him of thoſe Remedies which Buſineſs and Induſtry are wont to afford: For Men will be always exerting their Faculties one way or other, and their active Spirits, if they be not employed in doing good, will certainly prompt them to Evil: "The "ſtanding Water ſoon ſtinketh (*a*), whereas the current "ever keeps clear, and cleanly, conveying down all noiſome "Matter that might infect it, by the force of its Stream:" So a diligent and ſtudious Application of our Minds to honeſt Employments, with all Alacrity and Courage, notwithſtanding all our Croſſes and Diſappointments, is a ſure way to expel bad Thoughts, to divert us from the Senſe of

(*a*) *Bp.* Hall's *Meditations, and Vows*, Centur. 3. §. 39. p. 55. *among his Works*, Lond. 1625. fol.

our Misfortunes, and to procure and maintain Quiet and Content.

XXIII. But then Secondly, as we muſt be doing, ſo what we do, it muſt be good; and indeed a good Life muſt needs be a great help to Contentment, becauſe from thence will ariſe a good Conſcience, and from that ſo ample and firm a Satisfaction of Mind, and ſuch a firm Aſſurance of God's Favour, and Protection, as will prepare a Man with an undaunted Mind to withſtand all the Aſſaults of Fortune, and prevent his being diſturb'd with any Occurrences whatſoever. This it was that ſupported the bleſſed Apoſtles under all their Preſſures: This was their *Rejoycing, the Teſtimony of their Conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity they had their Converſation in the World,* 2 Cor. i. 12. *having always a Conſcience void of Offence both toward God and men,* Acts xxiv. 16. xxiii. 1. this, (*whilſt there is no Peace to the Wicked,* Iſa. xlviii. 22.) *is to the godly a continual Feaſt,* Prov. xv. 15. yielding far greater Pleaſure, and more ſolid Satisfaction than the greateſt Affluence or Proſperity can afford: A good Life, with a competent ſubſiſtence, and a contented Mind, being much better than all the Wealth in the World. *Godlineſs with Contentment,* ſaith St. *Paul,* 1 Tim. vi. 6. *is great Gain*: Godlineſs is very profitable and gainfull, not only becauſe it enricheth the Soul with that true contentment, as baniſhes all Murmuring, and Repining; but alſo becauſe it hath the promiſe of all ſuch outward Bleſſings, the Enjoyment whereof takes away all occaſion of Diſcontent; and therefore our Saviour tells us, *Mat.* vi. 33. That *if we firſt ſeek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs,* and make it our principal Buſineſs to approve our ſelves God's faithful Servants, by diligently performing whatſoever is required to render us acceptable in his ſight; that then God will be mindfull of us, and take care we be ſupplied with all Things that are really neceſſary and beſt for us, though perhaps not with all that we fanſie ſo to be. *Truſt in the Lord,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *and do good, and verily thou ſhalt be fed; commit thy way unto him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs,* Pſal. xxxvii. 3, 5. *he who is a Sun, and Shield to ſuch as walk uprightly, will withold no good thing from them,* Pſal. lxxxiv. 11. for though *the young Lions may lack, and ſuffer hunger, yet they that ſeek the Lord ſhall not want any thing that is good,* Pſal. xxxiv. 10. *I have been young,*

ſays

ſays *David, and now am old, yet have I not ſeen the Righteous forſaken, nor his Seed begging their Bread,* Pſal. xxxvii. 25. *To them, who love God, all things work together for good,* Rom. viii. 28. yea even Evils, and Afflictions, though evil to the wicked *(a)*, yet to the godly they are exceeding good, and beneficial.

XXIV. *For this their light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for them, an exceeding, ſurpaſſing, eternal weight of Glory,* 2 Cor. iv. 17. *yea to them, even death it ſelf, is gain,* Phil. i. 21. ſince thereby they exchange Earth for Heaven, and a mortal miſerable Life for one that is eternal, and happy. So that we ſee how profitable Godlineſs is unto all things, as *having the promiſe of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come,* 1 Tim. iv. 8. that is, of the Bleſſings of this preſent Life, ſo far as they conduce to our eternal Happineſs; and abſolutely of the Life to come: And conſequently we may perceive how great a Help to Contentment it is alſo, by fitting a Man's Mind to his Means, and fully convincing him, that the State, whatſoever it be, in which he is at preſent, is really the beſt, and fitteſt for him, and that for the time to come God will provide for him, and not ſuffer him to want any thing that he ſhall ſtand in need of. The good and godly man is well ſatisfied with the Portion God hath aſſign'd him, be it more or leſs; as well knowing, That *a little that a righteous man hath is better than the Riches of many Wicked,* Prov. xxxvii. 16. and *a ſmall matter with the fear of the Lord, is better than great Treaſure, and Trouble therewith,* Prov. xv. 16.

XXV. Neither may it be improper to ſend theſe Murmurers, and Complainers for Inſtruction to thoſe excellent Examples of Patience, Contentment and Acquieſcence, we may meet with, both in ſacred Hiſtory and profane. That excellent Philoſopher *Socrates (b)*, ſeeing the great variety of Things expoſed to ſale, would ſay to himſelf, "How "many Things are there, which I need not?" How little ſoever he had, it was ſtill enough, and though he wanted the means to live ſplendidly, yet he never anxiouſly ſought to acquire more, but how to accommodate his manner of Life to what he had already: And a certain Author *(c)* makes mention of a Turk at *Conſtantinople*, to whoſe Shop, when

(a) Bonis bona, malis mala. *(b)* Stanley's *Hiſt. of Philoſophy*, p. 91. Lond. 1687. fol. ed. 2. *(c)* Clark's *Mir.*

an Engliſh Merchant came to buy ſome Wares, the Turk told him that for that day, he had ſold enough, but deſired him to go to ſuch a Neighbour of his, where he might have as good Wares, and as cheap as he could ſell; for he, ſaith the Turk, hath had but little Cuſtom to Day.

XXVI. So likewiſe ſaith St. *James*, Chap. v. *v.* 11. *Ye have heard of the Patience of Job*; that Spectacle of Miſery, whom neither Adverſity could make impatient, nor Proſperity inſolent; under all thoſe bitter Calamities that befell him, he ſhewed no paſſionate Diſpleaſure or Diſcontent, nor entertained any hard or unſuitable Thoughts of God, or his Providence; he accuſed him not of Unkindneſs or Injuſtice, of Negligence or Impotency, in ſuffering the *Sabeans to carry off his Oxen, and his Aſſes*, Job i. 15, *&c. the Fire from Heaven to burn up, and conſume his Servants, and his Sheep*; *the Chaldeans to take away his Camels*; *and the great high wind to blow the Houſe down on his Children, and kill them*; no, *in all this Job ſinned not, neither charged God fooliſhly*, *v.* 22. He neither by impious Murmurs condemn'd what God thought fit to give way to, and permit; nor imprudently blaſphemed that Power he could not reſiſt. In like manner St. *Paul* tells us, *Phil.* iv. 11, 12. That *he had learned in whatſoever State he was, therewith to be content*; he *knew both how to be abaſed, and how to abound*; *every where, and in all Things he was inſtructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to ſuffer need*: He ſtill ſuited his Will to his Income, and did neither covet, or ſtand in need of more than what God was pleaſed to allow him. But above all, let us conſider how quietly the holy Jeſus, that grand Exemplar and Pattern, ſubmitted his Will to the Will of God? *Luke* xxii. 42. *Mat.* xxvi. 39. From the Manger to the Croſs, how was he *acquainted with Grief and Sorrow*? how was *he deſpiſed, and rejected of Men*? how was he *oppreſſed, and afflicted*? *and yet he opened not his Mouth* in Murmurings and Repinings, *but was as a Lamb brought to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, ſo was he*, Iſa. liii. 3. 7. he was ſo far from enjoying thoſe plentiful Accommodations others ſo earneſtly thirſt after, that *he had not where to lay his Head*, Mat. viii. 20. He was ſo far from living in Pleaſure and Delight, that *he ſpent his whole Life in journeying often*, 2 Cor. xi. 26, 27. *and in Perils by his own Country-men*; *in Faſtings often*

often, and in Wearineſs, and Painfulneſs, in Watchings often, and in Hunger, and thirſt; and yet all this he bore with a pious Reſignation of his Will, and perfect Tranquility and Satisfaction of Mind: *The Cup that his Father had prepared for him, he was ready to drink, though temper'd with the moſt bitter and loathſome Ingredients*, John xviii. 11. and that too with the cleareſt Serenity of Mind, and greateſt Sweetneſs of Carriage imaginable: Now ſince, as St. *Peter* affirms, 1 *Pet.* ii. 21. *Chriſt did thus ſuffer, leaving us an Example that we ſhould follow his Steps: let the ſame Mind therefore be in us, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. ii. 5. and let us be willing, when God thinks fit, with Alacrity and Courage *to take up our Croſs and follow him*, Mat. xvi. 24. without complaining of the Burthen, or finding Fault with the way.

XXVII. And that *God's Strength may the better be thus made perfect in our Weakneſs*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. ſince a religious, and reverent addreſſing our ſelves to Almighty God doth very much tend to the ſubduing ſuch Querulous Humours, and ſuppreſſing ſuch Murmurs and Complaints, by compoſing our Minds, and charming our Paſſions, by quickning our Hope, and ſtrengthening our Faith: Let us therefore not only caſt all our Cares upon him, who is of infinite Wiſdom, and therefore beſt able to chuſe for us; and of great Love, and therefore the moſt likely to diſpenſe the beſt Things; but let us alſo ſeek unto the Lord, and pour out our Hearts before the God of all Comfort and Conſolation, who is always moſt willing, and moſt able to relieve, and to protect us; humbly beſeeching him, from whom all good Things do come, to add likewiſe the Bleſſing of a contented Mind, without which there can be no true Taſte or Reliſh of any other: That he would not ſuffer any wicked Repining, or Diſtruſt, to get the Dominion over our Reaſon, or diſturb the Compoſure of our Souls; but that he would give us grace entirely to reſign up our ſelves to his Diſpoſal, and with a perfect Satisfaction to acquieſce in all his Diſpenſations; and without either envying our Neighbour's Condition, or murmuring at our own, paſs with a contented Mind through every State, and turn of our Lives, and gladly embrace, and undergoe whatſoever he ſhall think fit to allot, or lay upon us; *ſeeking, and ſetting our Affections upon thoſe Things*

which are above, Col. iii. 1, 2, 4. *where Chriſt ſitteth on the Right Hand of God, our gracious Maker and Preſerver; that ſo when Chriſt, who is our Life, ſhall appear, we alſo may appear with him in Glory.*

SECT. IV.

Of Fooliſh Jeſting.

I. THE next Offence of this Nature that comes under our Conſideration is *Fooliſh Jeſting,* which the Apoſtle forbids, *Eph.* v. 4. the Word (*a*) indeed made uſe of there by the Apoſtle, doth properly ſignifie Urbanity and Facetiouſneſs of Speech; Pleaſantry, or Complaiſance; Merriment or Drollery; and by the Philoſophers (who took it in a good Senſe) it was made a Vertue; as being oppoſed to (*b*) Scurrility on the one hand, and Clowniſhneſs (*c*) on the other; but by St. *Paul*'s joining it with *Filthineſs and fooliſh Talking,* it is evident it is there to be took in an ill Senſe (as ſometimes it is) for Scoffing, Buffoonry, and unſeemly Mirth, or for ſcurrilous and unſavoury Jeſting; which, as he preſently adds, are no Ways convenient, or becoming the Gravity and Sanctity of a Chriſtian; whoſe Buſineſs it is to purſue, and delight in Things of a more noble and worthy Nature, and not ſuffer his Mind to be ſo wholly intent upon ſuch trifling Divertiſements, as to render it indiſpoſed for religious Thoughts, and the practice of more ſerious and important Duties.

II. Not that our Religion is ſo harſh, and auſtere as continually to debar us from ſuch reaſonable and inoffenſive Facetiouſneſs, and from ſuch innocent and uſeful Pleaſures, as humane Life may ſeem to ſtand in need of, or require; neither is it expected that all manner of Mirth and Pleaſantneſs ſhould be perpetually baniſh'd; but only that the ſame be uſed moderately, in a decent manner, at proper Seaſons, and for due Ends: The wiſe Man ſays, *Eccleſ.* iii. 4. *There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh*; and were there not ſo, God would never have given that Power and Faculty unto Man: But then, that it is not always proper and commendable ſo to do, appears from *Solomon*'s affixing a time, or ſeaſon for

(*a*) Εὐτραπελία. (*b*) Βωμολοχία. (*c*) Ἀγροικία.

it:

it: When *Iſaac* was born, *Sarah* expreſt her Joy, by ſaying, *God hath made me to laugh, ſo that all that hear will laugh with me*, Gen. xxi. 6. the ſame Perſon, who laughed before, and was condemn'd for it, becauſe it proceeded from Irreverence or Diſtruſt then, *Gen.* xviii. 12, &c. was not blamed now, when ſhe laughed for another Cauſe, and expreſt her joyfull Aſſurance in another manner. So likewiſe the Pſalmiſt ſetting forth the Churches Joy at her incredible Return out of Captivity, ſays, *When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream; then was our Mouth filled with laughter, and our Tongue with ſinging*, Pſal. cxxvi. 1, 2.

III. It appears from St. *Paul*'s exhorting us to *rejoyce, and that always too, ſo it be in the Lord*, Phil. iii. 1. iv. 4. that thoſe have took up wrong Notions of Religion, who fanſie it to allow nothing at all of innocent Mirth, or good Humour; as if that, which is it ſelf, the never-failing ſource of real and ſubſtantial Joy, ſhould require a ſour and moroſe kind of Life; and we were at no time permitted, to be chearfull or pleaſant, No, moderate Jeſting, and ſparing Mirth are allowable, when uſed in a ſeemly manner for innocent Recreation, and harmleſs Delight, for the ſweetning Converſation, for the raiſing our drooping Spirits, and for the recreating (yea, and as it ſometimes happens, for the improving) our Minds: Neither can Pleaſantneſs in Diſcourſe, in convenient Seaſon, about Things that are indifferent, be condemn'd, when it is uſed not out of Malice, but Merriment, not to hurt or offend, but to profit and delight. 'Tis true indeed, as *Cicero* ſays (*a*) we are not born wholly for Play or Jeſting; but for graver Studies, and Matters of greater Importance; and therefore Jeſts muſt not be uſed as our conſtant Diet, but as Phyſick; or as the ſame eloquent Heathen there ſays, as ſleep to recreate, and refreſh us after we have been more buſily and ſeriouſly employed; and even then, as he adds, our Jeſting muſt not be immoderate and profuſe, but ingenious and witty, pleaſant and becoming. And ſince our bleſſed Saviour hath told us, *Mat.* xii. 36. That *Men muſt give an account at the Day of Judgment for every idle Word*, (*or vain Word*, as St. *Paul* expreſſeth it, *Eph.* v. 6.) *which they ſhall ſpeak*; then it behoveth

(*a*) *Neque enim ita generati à natura ſumus, ut ad ludum, jocumq; facti videamur*, &c. Cic. Offic. l. 1. p. 44. Lond. 1629.

them firſt to conſider not what may be moſt delightful for them to ſpeak, but what may be moſt expedient, and profitable for others to hear; and to avoid all ſuch frivolous, idle Facetiouſneſs, which is no ways conducible to any good End, or Purpoſe. And therefore when any are diſpoſed, and inclined to be merry after this manner, let them take great Care,

IV. Firſt, that their Mirth be not againſt Piety or Religion; for if ſo, then we may uſe *Solomon*'s Phraſe, and ſay *it is mad*, Eccleſ. ii. 2. For what greater ſign can there be of want of Wit, and barrenneſs of Invention, of defect of Goodneſs, and lack of Diſcretion? What can be more vainly Wicked, more intolerably Raſh, or more prodigiouſly Impudent and Audacious than the Practice of ſuch profane Jeſters, as are continually making ſacred Matters and holy Things the ſubject of their Sport, and Paſtime? Wounding their own Conſcience to make others merry, endangering their own Souls to make others laugh, and vainly to pleaſe men, provoking to anger that great and glorious God, who is *acquainted with all their Ways; ſo that there is not a Word in their Tongues, but he knoweth it altogether*, Pſalm cxxxix. 3, 4. for this certainly is none of that *ſound Speech which cannot be condemned*, which the Apoſtle St. *Paul* doth ſo much recommend, *Tit.* ii. 8.

V. In the next place, Care muſt be likewiſe taken, that their Jeſting be not againſt Charity or Juſtice, and that whilſt they ſtrive to delight ſome, they do not ſpeak any thing that may tend to the Diſgrace, or Prejudice of others: Such ſcurrilous Jeſting is ſo far from being praiſe-worthy, that it juſtly ranks thoſe that uſe it among ſuch Fools *Solomon* mentions, *Prov.* x. 23. who *make it their Sport to do Miſchief*: For ſuch Words are more than Wind, and many times produce diſmal Effects: They ſeem to proceed from Choler, rather than Wiſdom; and argue a Man to be a Buffoon, rather than a Wit. And yet ſome are ſo far bewitched with this vein of Jeſting, as to chuſe rather to loſe a Friend, than ſmother a Conceit; and value not, ſo they can but make a Jeſt, tho' at the ſame time they make an Enemy too. But ſuch as affect thoſe Jeſts moſt, which are moſt biting, had need be as much afraid of others Memory, as they fanſie others to be of their Wit: For many times theſe Sarcaſms and ſatyrical Expreſſions are remembred,

bred, when they who did ſpeak them have forgot 'em: The Earl of *Eſſex* is (*a*) ſaid once to have told Queen *Elizabeth*, That ſhe was as crooked in Diſpoſition, as ſhe was in Body, which Words (though ſhe had a great Kindneſs for him) ſhe never forgot, and the Earl is thought to have loſt his Head for them; and indeed it is very cruel (*b*) and inhumane, wantonly to inſult over the Unfortunate, and Afflicted, and make the Infirmities of others, whether natural or moral, the Subject of our Mirth, when they do more juſtly challenge our Compaſſion.

VI. Laſtly, They muſt alſo take great Care that their Mirth be not againſt Charity or Sobriety; and that they affect not to be Facetious in ſuch filthy and obſcene Matters, as are *not to be ſo much as named among Chriſtians*, Eph. v. 3. St. *Paul* is ſo far from commending ſuch noiſome Converſation, that he makes it *a grieving the holy Spirit of God*: So far is he from allowing ſuch unclean Diſcourſe, that he will not have an impure Word come out of our Mouths; *Eph.* iv. 29, 30. *Let no corrupt*, or rotten, *Communication*, ſays he, *proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is good to the uſe of Edifying, that it may miniſter Grace unto the Hearers; and grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are ſealed unto the day of Redemption*; plainly implying that ſuch Diſcourſe is ſo loathſome and odious to the Spirit of God, that dwelleth in us, that he is thereby, as it were, grieved with it, and provoked to ſuſpend his friendly and comfortable Operations in us, which leads to the laſt Offence of Speech to be conſidered, and that is Obſcene and Immodeſt Talk.

SECT. V.

Of Obſcene, and Immodeſt Talk.

I. OBſcene and Immodeſt Talk; or as St. *Paul* calls it, *filthy, or rotten Diſcourſe*, Eph. iv. 29. or *unclean and filthy Communication*, Col. iii. 8. is not unjuſtly by that Apoſtle ſo often and ſo ſtrictly forbidden, *Col.* iii. 8. Eph. iv. 29. v. 3, 4. not only becauſe *it is not convenient*, Eph. v. 4. and no ways *edifying*, Eph. iv. 29. but alſo becauſe it is a manifeſt Sign of an impure Heart: *for out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh*, ſaith our Saviour; *a good Man out of*

(*a*) *Sir* Henry Wotton's *Remains*, p. 52. Lond. 1651. (*b*) *Adverſus miſeros inhumanus eſt jocus.* Quint.

the

the good Treaſure of his Heart bringing forth that which is good, and an evil Man, out of the evil Treaſure of his Heart bringing forth that which is Evil, Luke vi. 45. Mat. xii. 34, 35. as if he had ſaid, Every Man hath a Treaſury, or Repoſitory within him, from whence all his Words and Actions are ſent forth, which is his Heart, and according to the Quality thereof, do his Words reliſh; they are manifeſt Indications (*a*) of what is within him, and as his Heart is, ſo by Conſequence will his Language be: An honeſt Man, and good Man, whoſe ſanctified Heart is a Repoſitory of good Purpoſes and Reſolutions, will at all times take care that what he ſpeaks be to God's Honour, and the Edification of others: *The Mouth of the Righteous,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſpeaketh Wiſdom, and his Tongue talketh of Judgment*; and the Reaſon is, as it preſently follows, *becauſe the Law of his God is in his Heart, therefore he doth not ſlide,* Pſal. xxxvii. 30, 31. but on the contrary, the Heart of a wicked Man, (like the unheal'd, and unwholſome Waters of *Jericho,* 2 Kings ii. 19, 21.) *ſends forth only Streams of Death and Barrenneſs.*

II. It was *Cicero*'s Advice (*b*), chiefly to take care leſt our Diſcourſe prove our Morals to be bad; as ſuppoſing that from his Talk a man might eaſily be known what he was: But beſides, there is a great deal of Reaſon ſuch evil Communication ſhould be avoided, not only becauſe it is a certain ſign of an impure Mind and Heart, but alſo becauſe it is the quickeſt corrupter of good Manners, 1 *Cor.* xv. 33. and ſoon makes thoſe vitious and debauched, who were vertuous and ſober before. It is a Saying of St. *Ambroſe* (*c*), "That Luſt or Concupiſcence is fed by Feaſting, nou-"riſhed by Delights or Pleaſures, inflamed and ſet on fire "by Wine and Drunkenneſs; but the greateſt Incentive and "Cheriſher thereof is obſcene Talk;" which eaſily and inſenſibly raiſes and ſuggeſts unchaſt and immodeſt Thoughts, and then theſe evil Motions thus ſtirred up being entertained by the Will with Conſent and Delight, from thence proceed evil Deeds and Actions; therefore St. *James* ſays, *Jam.* i. 15. That *Luſt when it hath thus conceived, bringeth forth Sin*; and *Muſonius* makes the not avoiding

(*a*) *Sermo index Animi.* (*b*) *Imprimis provident, nè ſermo vitium aliquod indicet ineſſe moribus.* Cic. Offic. l. 1. p. 57. Lond. 1629. (*c*) *Paſcitur libido convivüis,* &c. *graviora ſunt fomenta verborum.* Ambr. *de pœnit.*

obſcene

obscene and immoderate Discourse to be the Source and Spring of Evil-living; from which therefore we ought to keep our Speech as clean, as we would our Meat from Poison; and whensoever we are forced to mention any Thing, that may move blushing, we must, as we are taught in holy Scripture, *Gen.* iv. 1. 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 3. use as seemly Words as may be chosen, always remembring that known Rule, "That which is not fit to be done, is not fit to be spoken."

The Close, or Conclusion.

I. THese are the common Offences, and Inordinacies of an unbridled Tongue; from which those who would keep themselves free must in the first place carefully avoid the Company and Conversation of such as are addicted to the same, 2 *Thes.* iii. 14. otherwise it will be as difficult to preserve themselves pure, and undefiled, as for those that dwell in a contagious and unhealthy Air, to escape being infected: Let *Joseph* dwell a while in *Pharaoh*'s Court, and he will soon learn to swear *by the Life of Pharaoh*, Gen. xlii. 15, 16. Neither is it any wonder that *Isaiah* should be *a Man of unclean Lips*, seeing he dwelt in the midst of a People that were so too, *Isa.* vi. 5. For Men are not like Fish, which though they live in the Sea, yet tast not of the Salt; but if they company and converse with such as are defiled, will be apt to attract some Taint and Contagion from the same; as the Psalmist observes concerning the People of *Israel*, that they were no sooner *mingled among the Heathen, but they learned their Works*, Psal. cvi. 35. And because all Wickedness, for the most part, proceeds from bad Examples and Imitation, in the very beginning of the Book of *Psalms* he sets forth the Blessedness of that Man, who takes care to avoid not only the Example, but the Company too of the Wicked and Profane, *Psal.* i. 1. yea, he tells us this was his own Practice; he would first bid them *depart from him*, Psal. cxix. 115. and if that would not do, he would go from them: *I have not sat*, saith he, *with vain Persons, neither will I go in with Dissemblers: I have hated the Congregation of evil Doers, and will not sit with the Wicked*, Psalm xxvi. 4, 5. For the same Reason *Solomon* exhorts, *not to enter into the Path of the Wicked, and not to go in the way of evil Men; but to avoid it, and not pass by it, to turn from it, and pass away*, Prov. iv. 14, 15. and again, *Prov.* xxii. 24, 25.

Make

Make no Friendſhip with an angry Man, and with a furious Man thou ſhalt not go; leſt thou learn his Ways, and get a Snare to thy Soul.

II. In the next Place, before ever they ſpeak, let them conſider what it is they are going to ſay, and for what End, to whom they are about (*a*) to ſpeak, and after what manner: Neither are the time when, and the place where to be leſs obſerved: It is St. *James*'s Advice not to be overhaſty, but *ſlow to ſpeak*, Jam. i. 19. and a Saying of *Solomon*, *He that anſwereth a Matter before he heareth it, it is Folly and Shame unto him; but he that hath Knowledge ſpareth his Words, and he that ſhutteth his Lips is eſteemed a Man of Underſtanding*, Prov. xviii. 13. xvii. 27, 28. It is reported of that eloquent Oratour, and renowned Governour of *Athens*, Pericles (*b*), that whenever he was to make a Speech to the People he firſt prayed, that no Word might unawares ſlip out of his Mouth, that was not to the Purpoſe; as the Roman Oratours were wont to do, that what they were about to ſpeak might be for the Good and Advantage of the Common-Wealth; and indeed, it would be well if all would conſider before-hand, how true and honeſt, how ſafe and becoming, how neceſſary and profitable their Diſcourſe is like to be; and ſo much the rather, becauſe as there is nothing more eaſy than to trip with the Tongue, ſo there is many times nothing of more pernicious Conſequence. And thus having gone through with the moſt common and miſchievous Offences of Speech; and briefly propoſed Remedies to cure and prevent the ſame; nothing now remains but to add ſome Arguments, or Reaſons to provoke and incourage the Uſe and Application of them; and of theſe the Chief are the four following.

III. *Firſt*, God hath endued and adorned the Tongue with the Gift of Speech and Utterance (the great Benefit and Excellency thereof, we ſhould ſoon perceive, were we for a time ſtruck dumb) for two Ends; 1ſt. For his own Glory; for as we and all our Members were deſigned, and framed to glorify our Creator, ſo were our Tongues chiefly given us to expreſs our Love, and Gratitude toward him, to acknowledge his Benefits, and magnifie his Goodneſs; to celebrate his Praiſes, and promote his Honour and Service

(*a*) *Quid de quoq; viro, & cui dicas ſæpè caveto.* Horat. (*b*) Ælian. l. 4. *de var. Hiſt.*

all

all the Days of our Life. *The Lord*, ſaith the wiſe Man, *hath given me a Tongue, and I will praiſe him therewith*, Eccleſ. li. 22. And the ſame uſe did *David* make of his Tongue alſo; yea, ſo fully was he convinced that that Member was as well deſign'd to be the proper Inſtrument of glorifying God, as the diſtinguiſhing Glory of Man above the Beaſts, which have Tongues, and ſpeak not, that he calls it in ſeveral Places *his Glory*, Pſal. xvi. 9. xxx. 12, *&c.* and how wholly he was bent to employ it in praiſing God appears from his Expreſſions throughout the whole Book of *Pſalms*; as *Pſal.* lvii. 7, 8, *&c. My Heart is fixed, O God, my Heart is fixed, I will ſing, and give Praiſe; awake up my Glory, awake Pſaltery, and Harp*, &c. and again, *Pſal.* cviii. 1, &c. *O God, my Heart is fixed, I will ſing, and give praiſe, even with my glory; awake Pſaltery, and Harp, I my ſelf will awake early: I will praiſe thee, O Lord, among the People, and I will ſing Praiſes unto thee among the Nations: For thy Mercy is great above the Heavens, and thy Truth reacheth unto the Clouds; be thou exalted, O God, above the Heavens, and thy Glory above all the Earth.* And as he did, ſo are we obliged to glorifie God alſo; we are *to offer to him continually the Sacrifice of Praiſe, that is the fruit, or calves of our Lips, giving Thanks to his Name*, Heb. xiii. 15. Hoſ. xiv. 2. this is that true Sacrifice, which *far ſurpaſſeth the Fleſh of Bulls, and the Blood of Goats*, Pſal. l. 13. *even the offering unto God thanksgiving, v.* 14. *for who ſo offereth praiſe, glorifieth him*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *v.* 23. which was the firſt end for which Speech was given us, *viz.* God's Glory.

IV. The other was the good of Men, to render our Converſation with one another more uſeful, and more pleaſant, that we might the better make known our Wants and ſolicite Relief, and the more eaſily communicate Inſtruction and Reproof, Conſolation and Advice, and whatever elſe may ſerve to make us paſs the few and evil Days of our Life with the greater Comfort; and make us the more *thorowly furniſhed unto all good Works*, 2 Tim. iii. 17. Thoſe therefore that apply this excellent and uſeful Faculty of ſpeaking to any impious and irreligious, to any uncharitable and miſchievous Purpoſes; do make it flatly to contradict thoſe noble and advantageous Ends for which it was deſign'd; thoſe whoſe Diſcourſe doth any ways tend to the hurt and diſturbance of humane Society, inſtead of benefiting the ſame; and, who inſtead of ſending up the acceptable

table Incenſe of Prayer and Praiſe do ungratefully exhauſt their Breath to the Diſhonour of him that gave it; and to the Diſparagement of his Worſhip, or any thing relating thereunto: Theſe do manifeſtly pervert and abuſe what the Pſalmiſt calls *the beſt Member that they have*, Phil. iii. 19. by ſuch Enormities of Speech Converſation is ſpoil'd; by ſuch *evil Communication good Manners are corrupted*, 1 Cor. xv. 33. and therefore *Solomon* adviſeth *to go from the Preſence of a Fooliſh Man, when we perceive not in him the Lips of Knowledge*, Prov. xiv. 7. and thoſe Lips certainly can never be termed ſo, which are opened directly contrary to the Ends already mentioned, by thoſe inconſiderate Perſons, who aſſume to themſelves a Liberty to ſpeak what they pleaſe, and think their Lips to be ſo far their own, as to have *no Lord over them*, Pſal. xii. 4.

V. Another Reaſon for bridling the Tongue is given us by St. *James*, Chap. iii. *v.* 2. ſaying, *If any man offend not in Word, the ſame is a perfect Man*; where by not offending in Word we are to underſtand ſuch a conſtant and watchful governing of the Tongue, as not only to avoid all vain and uſeleſs, all fooliſh and bombaſt Diſcourſe, but alſo to ſpeak nothing but what is neceſſary and to the Purpoſe, and that too in due Seaſon, and after a due manner, without tranſgreſſing any of thoſe Rules right Reaſon hath preſcribed, or thwarting thoſe natural Ends, for which Speech was given; and he that doth ſo, the Apoſtle calls a *perfect Man*; not abſolutely perfect according to all parts and degrees of Perfection, without any blemiſh of Soul, or blame in Life; no, ſuch a Perfection is inconſiſtent with the Nature and State of Man here: *God alone is thus good and perfect*, Mat. xix. 17. and *if we juſtifie our ſelves, our own Mouth ſhall condemn us*, Job ix. 20. *if we ſay we are perfect, it ſhall alſo prove us perverſe.* St. *Paul* ſpeaking of himſelf, ſays, *Phil.* iii. 12. *He was not already perfect; and if thou Lord*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſhouldſt be extream to mark what is done amiſs, who may abide it*, Pſal. cxxx. 3. For *Solomon* ſays, *Eccleſ.* vii. 20. *There is not a juſt man upon Earth that ſinneth not*; and St. *James*, That *in many Things we offend all*, Jam. iii. 2. The good we do is very little, and that little very imperfect, and that Imperfection is ſuch, as would juſtly be condemned were not God *merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs*, Ex. xxxiv. 6.

VI. So

VI. So that the Word *Perfect* here is to be took in the ſame Senſe, as it is by holy *David*, Pſal. xxxvii. 37. ſaying, *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright, for the End of that Man is Peace*; or in the Book of *Job*, where it is ſaid, Job *was a perfect Man*, Job i. 1. and ii. 3. which explained by the following Words, That *he was upright, fearing God, and eſchewing Evil*, i. e. he was a ſincere, honeſt Man, without any Fraud, or Diſſimulation, one that was truly devout and religious, and took diligent Care to *have always a Conſcience void of Offence both toward God and Man*, Acts xxiv. 16. in like manner as thoſe Words of St. *Luke* concerning *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* are to be underſtood, where he ſays, *Luke* i. 6. *they were both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments, and Ordinances of the Lord, blameleſs*; not that they were without Sin, but were ſincere upright Perſons, free from all Hypocriſy, and living in ſuch an Obedience to God's Commands (without indulging themſelves in any known Sin) as with God's merciful Allowance to humane Frailties, did render them approved of God. So here, *Jam.* iii. 2. *He that offendeth not in Word is ſaid to be a perfect Man*, i. e. a Perſon of great Wiſdom and Diſcretion, and of ſingular Worth and Integrity; one that is perfect as far as humane Frailty doth admit, and may reaſonably be preſumed to be ſo upright and blameleſs, during the whole Courſe of his Life, as to be free from all hainous Crimes and notorious Defects; as being able alſo to bridle the whole Body (*i. e.* all the Members thereof, as his Eyes, Ears, *&c.*) all which it is eaſier to govern than the Tongue, and conſequently ſuch a one is rightly qualified to order all his Actions wiſely and juſtly.

VII. But on the other hand, the ſame Apoſtle, who tells us, That he who doth thus bridle his Tongue, *is a perfect Man*; doth alſo aſſure us, *Jam.* i. 26. That he who doth not ſo *deceiveth his own Heart*, if he pretend or fanſie that he is religious; becauſe the Religion of ſuch a Man is vain and inſignificant. Some will have the Word Religion derived from a Latin Word (*a*), which ſignifies to tye, or bind faſt; becauſe under that Word are comprehended all thoſe Duties we are bound to perform with relation either to God or

(*a*) *Religio dicitur à religando, & ſignificat omnia illa pietatis officia quibus Deo, & proximo obligamur.* Aug. *de ver* Rel. c. 55. & Lactant. l. 5. inſt. 28.

Man:

Man: Now, as there is no greater Inſtance, or ſurer Argument of ſolid Goodneſs, than a right and conſtant Government of the Tongue; ſo, ſince of all Vices, thoſe of that petulant and unruly Member are moſt ordinary, it muſt be granted, that he that doth ſo rule, and manage that, as to keep himſelf free from all Faults of that Nature, doth thereby demonſtrate himſelf to be able to reſiſt all other Temptations, & regulate his Actions aright; that he is a true ſincere Chriſtian, and, in the Scripture Phraſe, *a perfect Man*; *his Tongue is Health*, Prov. xii. 18. and *a Tree of Life*, Prov. xv. 4. *his Mouth is a Well of Life*, Prov. x. 11. and *diſperſeth Knowledge*, Prov. xv. 7. and *every Man ſhall kiſs his Lips*, Prov. xxiv. 26. For ſince Speech is not only judged to be the trueſt Character of the Mind, but alſo to have a general Influence on our Actions; and that from the Tongue, when not rightly governed, moſt of thoſe Troubles and Miſchiefs, which vex and diſturb mankind, do naturally ſpring: It muſt be confeſt, that he that can curb and rule the ſame according to Duty, and right Reaſon, is moſt likely to be a Perſon of ſo great Vertue and Worth, as to be able likewiſe to maintain a conſtant Guard over his Heart, and to *make all his Ways and Doings good*, Jer. xviii. 11.

VIII. Thus our bleſſed Saviour, who is ſaid to have ſpoke, as never man did, did all along govern his Tongue, his Speech was ever *Excellent*, Prov. xvii. 7. and *comely*, Cantic. iv. 2. *always with Grace, and ſeaſoned with Salt*, Col. iv. 6. pure and wholeſome, prudent and diſcreet: We never find him telling idle Stories, or trumpeting out his own Praiſe; never ſlandering, deceiving, or abuſing any: It is true indeed he was (as St. *Stephen* ſays of *Moſes*, Acts vii. 22.) *mighty both in Words and Deeds*; but then *his Words were gracious Words*, Luke 4. 22. and *Words of eternal Life*, John vi. 68. he ſpent his Breath in publiſhing the Glory of God, in teaching and inſtructing ſuch as did wander in wrong Paths, in reproving obſtinate Sinners, in encouraging the doubtful and faint-hearted; in comforting the afflicted, in curing the Sick, in raiſing the dead, in ſtilling Storms and Tempeſts, in forgiving Sins, in praying for the Impenitent, in giving Thanks to his Father, &c. This was the conſtant Practice of our great Pattern and Exemplar, the moſt perfect of any that was ever made Man; *whoſe Steps he that followeth*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. *is a perfect Man, thoroughly ſtabliſh'd in every good Word and Work*, 2 Theſ. ii. 17. whilſt on the

con-

contrary, what *Solomon* says of one *that hath no rule over his own Spirit*, Prov. xxv. 28. may be likewise said of him that hath no Rule over his own Tongue too, he is like a City that is broken down, and without Walls, which lying thus open to all Assailants must needs be continually in great danger; and this leads to

IX. Another Reason for bridling the Tongue, took notice of both by the Psalmist in the old Testament, *Psal.* xxxiv. 12, 13. and the Apostle in the new, 1 *Pet.* iii. 10. *viz.* That *whosoever desireth Life and would see good Days, must keep his Tongue from evil, & his Lips from speaking Guile.* It was a Saying of *Seneca* (*a*) "That nothing doth so much conduce to a Mans Quiet "and Advantage as to keep his Tongue within his Teeth, and "to talk more with himself than others"; or as the Psalmist words it, *to commune with his own Heart, and be still*, Psal. iv. 4. the Truth of which hath been partly proved already; and indeed it cannot otherwise be expected but that such as will not *study to be quiet, and mind their own Business*, 1 Thess. iv. 11. but still be *busie-bodies in other mens matters*, 1 Pet. iv. 15. should meet with a great deal of trouble; *and that with the same measure they meet unto others, it should be measured to them again* Mat. vii. 2. Holy *David* tells us, *Psal.* cxl. 11. That *a Man, full of Words, shall not prosper upon the Earth*, and *Solomon* his Son, Prov. xiv. 23. That *the Talk of the Lips tendeth only to Poverty*, intimating thereby, not only that such as are addicted to idle Pratings are seldom good for any thing else, and commonly by thus mis-spending their time, reduce themselves to Beggary and Contempt; but also that there is no more ready way for Persons to lose their Custom, Friends and Estates, than by not governing and restraining their licentious Tongues; upon which, whilst they set no guard, they are by the same many times hurried into a thousand Indecencies, and brought into much Danger and Trouble. *Theophrastus* was wont to say, "It was safer trusting to an unbridled Horse, "than to an unrestrained and unbridled Tongue;" and *Euripides* (*b*) will have the end of such intemperate Speech to be Misery and Adversity: I am sure *Solomon* affirms, Prov. xvii. 20. That *he that hath a perverse Tongue falleth into Mischief*; and *Prov.* xii. 13. That *the wicked is snared by the Transgression of his Lips, whilst the just shall come out of Trou-*

(*a*) *Nihil æquè proderit ad quietem*, Senec. epist. 110. ad Lucil.
(*b*) Ἀχαλίνων στομάτων, ἀνόμου τε ἀφροσύνης τὸ τέλος, δυσπραξία. Eur.

ble; That *a Fool's Mouth is his Deſtruction, and his Lips are the Snare of his Soul*, Prov. xviii. 7. That *whoſo keepeth his Mouth and his Tongue, keepeth his Soul from Troubles*, Prov. xxi. 23. *whilſt the Mouth of the Fooliſh is near Deſtruction*, Prov. x. 14. That *he that keepeth his Mouth, keepeth his Life, but he that openeth wide his Lips ſhall have Deſtruction*, Prov. xiii. 3. *&c.*

X. And indeed not to mention thoſe many Quarrels, and Animoſities that have took their riſe from injurious, and reproachful Language, nor that Diſtance and Shyneſs between Relations and Friends, which too too often proceeds from the ſame Cauſe, it is certain, that ſome Mens perulant, and too buſie Tongues, have betray'd them to a great deal of Miſchief, and become as fatal to their Owners, as they have been troubleſome and vexatious to all that are round about 'em. The Son of *Sirach* tells us, *Eccluſ.* xxviii. 18. That *many have fallen by the edge of the Sword, but not ſo many as have fallen by the Tongue*; and if ſo, it is no wonder he ſays in other Places, That *the Man is bleſſed that hath not ſlipt with his Mouth, and is not pricked with the multitude of Sins*, Eccluſ. xiv. 1. *Well is he, that dwelleth with a Wife of Underſtanding, and hath not ſlipped with his Tongue, nor ſerved a Man more unworthy than himſelf*, Eccluſ. xxv. 8. So that I ſhall conclude this Paragraph with the Words of an eminent Divine (*a*), "The way to live with Honour, and dye with "Praiſe is to be honeſt in our Deſires and temperate in our "Tongues;" which brings me to the laſt Reaſon I ſhall give for our being ſo, *viz.*

XI. Becauſe this is the ready way to obtain not only the Bleſſings of this Life, but likewiſe of that to come: *Solomon* ſays, Prov. xviii. 21. That *Death and Life are in the Power of the Tongue*; and *v.* 7. That *a Fool's Lips are the Snare of his Soul*; and indeed, that Words are more than Wind, neither vaniſh with the Breath that utters them, but ſtand all recorded in the Celeſtial Archives, is not only intimated by the wiſe Man, *Wiſd.* i. 9, 6. ſaying, That *Inquiſition ſhall be made into the Counſels of the Ungodly, and the ſound of his Words ſhall come unto the Lord; who is a Witneſs of his Reins, and a true Beholder of his Heart; and a Hearer of the Tongue*; but alſo expreſly declared by Chriſt himſelf, where he ſays, *Mat.* xii. 37. That *by our Words we ſhall be juſtified at the Day of Judgment, and by our Words we ſhall be condemned.*

(*a*) *Bp.* Hall, *in his Contemplations on the Bible.*

Whence

Whence we may eaſily perceive, that when God ſhall come to reward the godly and puniſh the wicked, he will take notice not only of our Actions, but alſo of our Words, as being true Interpreters of our Hearts; ſince then the Lapſes of the Tongue are ſo very dangerous, as well as baſe, and our eternal Salvation doth ſo much depend upon the right management of our Speech; let thoſe who have not obſerved it before, take care in time, leſt they one day in Hell with the rich man in the Goſpel, beg for Water to cool thoſe Tongues, of which they made ſo ill uſe before.

XII. To conclude therefore, let us for ever *lay aſide all Malice and Guile and Hypocriſies, and Envies, and Evil-ſpeakings*, 1 Pet. ii. 1. and *let our Speech be always with Grace, ſeaſoned with Salt*, Col. iv. 6. prudent, pertinent and wholſome; let us be courteous and affable, faithful in our Promiſes, ſincere in our Profeſſions of Love and Kindneſs, diſcreet in our Praiſes, and friendly in our Admonitions; inſtead of Blaſphemy or prophane ſwearing, let the Name of God be never mentioned, unleſs with the moſt awful Reverence and Fear: Inſtead of reproaching, or falſly accuſing others, let us confeſs and bewail our own Tranſgreſſions; inſtead of ſlandering or backbiting our Neighbour, let us tenderly *admoniſh him as a Brother*, 2 Theſſ. iii. 25. let us *bleſs, and curſe not*, Rom. xii. 14. *Let all Bitterneſs and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour*, be turned into *tender-heartedneſs* and *Love*, Eph. iv. 31, 32. Let ſincerity and Truth take place of Lying and Diſſimulation, *Eph.* iv. 15, 25. let there be no Murmuring and Complaining, but only *giving Thanks*, Eph. v. 4. with *Pſalms and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs, ſinging and making Melody to the Lord*, *v.* 19. and in ſhort, let *no fooliſh talking, or jeſting*, *v.* 4. *no filthineſs, or corrupt communication proceed out of our Mouths, but only that which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter Grace unto the Hearers*, Eph. iv. 29. And to that End, let us deſire Almighty God (*who knows altogether every Word in our Tongue*, Pſal. cxxxix. 4.) to *ſet a Watch before our Mouths, and to keep the Door of our Lips*, Pſal. cxli. 3. not to ſuffer any Adders Poiſon to lie concealed under theſe, *Pſal.* cxl. 3. nor any Slandering and Detraction, any Perjury or Lying, or any the like dangerous Sins to proceed out of the other; and mercifully to grant that our Tongues may not be like ſharp and miſchievous Razors, *Pſal.* lii. 2. but the beſt Member that we have, *Pſal.* cviii. 1. and our *Glory*, Pſal. lvii. 8. and that they will be, when they

are put to the ſame uſe, for which they were given, *viz.* the promoting the good of Mankind, and the Honour of Almighty God, by magnifying his Goodneſs, and celebrating his Praiſe; for to him certainly are due, all Honour, and Glory, both now and for evermore. *Amen.*

FINIS.

The Author's Abſence from the Preſs, has occaſion'd the following Errors; as for others leſs material, the Reader *is deſir'd to correct them with his Pen.*

ERRATA.

PAge 3. l. 29. for ſticking, r. ſtriking. p. 6. l. 18. for valuable, r. voluble, ib. l. 33. & 35. r. Secondly, Thirdly. p. 7. l. 10. for Eccleſ. xi. r. Eccluſ. li. p. 9. l. 3. for daily, r. eaſily. p. 10. l. 1. for ſpeaking, r. did ſpeak. p. 11. l. 35. for any, r. many. p. 12. l. 25. for or, r. as. p. 14. l. 37. after cannot, add otherwiſe. p. 16. l. 34. for lviii. 2, r. lxiii. 11. p. 29. l. 13. for were, r. where. p. 31. l. 24. for way, r. away. p. 51. l. 25. for Pſal. r. Iſaiah. ib. l. 38. for him, r. them. p. 54. l. 33. for Poets, r. Poet. p. 57. l. 39. for minds, r. mind. p. 68. l. 35. for his, r. the. p. 69. l. 1. for of, r. or. ib. l. 24. blot out, alſo. ib. l. 38. blot out, that. p. 71. l. 18. blot out, to prevent. p. 83. l. 13. blot out, a. p. 86. l. 19. for Laws r. Law. p. 88. l. 16. blot out, and. P. 95. l. 5. for is, r. it. p. 96. l. 31. for durable, r. adorable. p. 98. l. 8. for Conviction, r. Converſion. ib. l. 31. for ſcorner, r. ſcorners. ib. l. 38. after mock'd, add, him. p. 106. l. 22. for wiſe, r. wiſer. p. 109. l. 22. for or, r. of. p. 110. l. 33. for Puniſhments, r. Puniſhment. p. 111. l. 19. for there, r. theſe. p. 116. l. 32. blot out of, after King. p. 121. l. 15. for to, r. needs. p. 125. l. 17. for Langunge, r. Language. p. 128. l. 37, blot out, and. p. 130. l. 18. for a, r. his Maſter. p. 134. l. 11. for is, r. it. p. 135. l. 2. for greater, r great. ib. l. 6. for belongeth, r. belonging. p. 136. l. 10. blot out, us. p. 137. l. 30. for and, r. many that. p. 141. l. 18. for argyriſts, r. argyritis. p. 144. l. 35. for for, r of. & for of, r. for. p. 146. l. 27. for fall, read fail. p. 147. l. 10. for ſlipt, r. ſplit. p. 152. l. 34. after are, add, brought in. p. 163. l. 16. for telle, r. tell. p. 164. l. 18. for vth, r. vith. p. 170. l. 4. for intended, r. indented. p. 174. l. 11. for appearances, r. appearance. p. 178. l. 21. for ſpeaks, r. did ſpeak. p. 179. l. 12. for Reaſon, r. Seaſon. p. 183. l. 9. for more, r. no more. p. 186. l. 13. for ſlipt r. ſlip. ib. l. 27. after therefore, add ſome. p. 188. l. 27. for thus, r. ſuch. p. 189. l. 3. for though, r. as. ib. for be, r. is. ib. l. 4. for yet, r. ſo. p. 196. l. 29. for Judeth, r. Judges. p. 200. l. 40. for he, r. ſhe. p. 205. l. 8. for Zeal, r. real. p. 206. l. 5. for inordinacy, r. inordinancy. ib. l. 26. for numbers, r. number. p. 208. l. 16. for turned, r. turning. p. 210. l. 20. for their, r. our. ib. l. 32. for 2 Pet. ii. 1. r. Rom. vi. 16. p. 313. l. 13. for who, r. which. ib. l. 22. after alſo, add, and. ib. l. 23. for they not, r. not Perſons. p. 219. l. 6. for the, r. our. ib. l. 20. after enjoyment, add, of them. p. 219. l. 22. for by, r. be. p. 220. l. 17. for ſolitude, r. ſolicitude. p. 222. l. 7. for happy, r. happier. p. 224. l. 7. for ſolitude, r. ſolicitude. p. 225. l. 27. for to open, r. open to. p. 233. l. 12. for Charity, r. Chaſtity. p. 235. l. 10. for inordinacies, r. inordinancies. p. 236. l. 34. for hereof, r. whereof. p. 238. l. 5. for Phil. iii. 19. r. Pſal. cviii. 1. p. 239. l. 5. after which, is. p. 241. l. 26. for pratings, r. prating. p. 243. l. 37. for Pſal. [illegible] 3.

